R. L. McWilliams

THE MUSTARD TREE

THE MUSTARD TREE

AN ARGUMENT ON BEHALF OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

BY

O. R. VASSALL - PHILLIPS

OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

WITH A PREFACE BY MGR. BENSON

AND

AN EPILOGUE BY HILAIRE BELLOC

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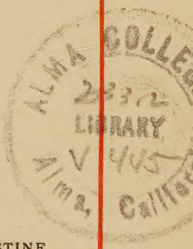

"'Look at me carefully,' says the Church to you."
ST. AUGUSTINE

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SUMMA REVERENTIA ET HUMILITATE

DISCIPULUS BENEFICIORUM HAUD IMMEMOR

"Then said He, unto what is the Kingdom of God like, and whereunto shall I liken it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree, and the birds of the air lodged in the branches thereof."

"Facilius dubitarem vivere me, quam non esse Veritatem, quæ per ea, quæ facta sunt, intellecta conspicitur."

S. AUGUSTINUS.

PREFACE

IT is the common method, as the author of this book points out, of Catholic apologists to begin by establishing the Divine Authority of Jesus Christ, then that of the Church, and finally, as a necessary consequence, the truth of the doctrine she proposes to our belief—a method which has been in the past (as no doubt it will also be in the future) of incalculable service towards the conversion of souls.

But, in modern days, minds are beginning to scrutinize phenomena from a new angle, and it is largely to men who have had the wide and active experiences of my friend, Father Vassall-Phillips, that the existence of this other angle becomes apparent. It is the mission-preacher, and the instructor of proselytes, who learns how souls as a matter of fact do face questions of religion, whereas the student and the professional theologian tend rather to form opinions as to how inquirers ought to do so. For, as Cardinal Manning pointed out long ago, not only is there amongst us in the present day a great deal of that overt Rationalism which formally challenges the first principles of faith, but, what is even more subtle and dangerous

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(since it is largely concealed even from those affected by it), there is also a widespread spirit of incipient Rationalism which, while not explicitly denying these first principles, is yet sufficiently doubtful about them to distrust all conclusions based upon their foundations. Accordingly, it would seem as if another method than that of deductive argument must be used towards those whose methods of thought are neither profound nor exact. Once men established the principle first, and examined later its manifestations; now it is the phenomena first and the cause second. Men must have facts first and explanations afterwards. In history, in science, in almost every branch of knowledge, men are once more acting along the lines which are, after all, those sanctioned by our Blessed Lord Himself in the words, "By their fruits you shall know them."

Now, in many ways the old method was apt to be unconvincing, owing to the fact that those who most confidently appeal to Reason are usually the very persons most controlled by Imagination. If they cannot "see," as they would say, the situation as a whole, they are apt to distrust the entire line of irrefutable argument by which its soundness is established, even though they cannot lay their finger upon any faulty link. Even after, step by step, the process of life had been traced—after, for

example, the Catechism had been shown to be nothing more than the inevitable expansion of the Apostolic creed—yet an uneasy sense remained in the mind of the inquirer that he had in some way been tricked; he was still faced, in spite of the intellectual justification, by the imaginative difficulty of the marked dissimilarity between the exuberance of the one and the stern nakedness of the other. At some point, he was apt to tell himself, the transforming poison must have been introduced whereby deformity took the place of legitimate growth. It is this mentality which is most characteristic of our own age. Certainly it has its advantages in widening general views of life—men act as entire human beings rather than as "thinking machines"—yet the very gain in wideness means, nearly always, a loss in depth.

It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, to do what is possible in meeting the inquirer on the ground which he is timid of leaving, and to begin at once by acknowledging cordially that the Catholicism of to-day appears to be a very different thing from the religious atmosphere of the Acts of the Apostles. Then, having done this, the argument begins in a new aspect.

"Here," we exclaim, "are undeniable phenomena at the present day. Here are certain vast doctrines, appearing, no doubt, at first strikingly different from those which the

Apostles taught, yet believed with the utmost simplicity and confidence by men of the most powerful intellects and the most disinterested lives, believed by men of all classes, all attainments, all nations, and all temperaments, and of all centuries; by men, moreover, who have as full access to, and familiarity with, the earliest records of Christianity as can any Protestant have who believes that the Bible was first rediscovered by Martin Luther. This, then, is a remarkable phenomenon, and there must, therefore, be some enormous cause behind. If it can be shown that this faith is beyond the power of men to produce,—this faith, emphasized as it is by the startling unanimity with which it is maintained, as well as by the wideness and length of its expansion; if man cannot have caused it, there remains only a supernatural explanation. Either God or Satan must be behind it. Let us then examine these records of the origin of Christianity together; and if we find in them that which the Church claims—namely, that these particular doctrines which are your stumbling-block are there plainly promulgated and declared, and that in the face of the utmost improbability of success, we shall have gone a very long way to establish the central Christian claim—that He who first uttered them, and predicted their acceptance by His disciples of all ages, is none other than Divine."

Such, then, is the argument of this book. Undeniable facts of *the present day* are first stated, fairly and exhaustively—the *facts*, for example, of the Unity of the Church, of the intense faith of Catholics in the Eucharist, of devotion to Mary—these things are described, eloquently indeed (since it is first the Imagination to which an appeal must be made), yet honestly and proportionably; and then, later, the Reason comes in, and it is before the bar of Reason that the question is pleaded, as to whether any explanation except the truth of the Divinity of Christ can adequately meet these facts—the persistence of the faith and the devotion, through so many centuries, directed towards dogmas so evidently difficult and profound. The author has also with great erudition and patience supplied countless testimonies from the Fathers, not necessarily as authorities which must be accepted, but as witnesses whose testimony cannot be gainsaid.

And it is indeed the very argument of our Lord Himself. No other final and conclusive sign shall be given to this or to any other generation but "the sign of the prophet Jonas," It was by the Resurrection of the natural Body of Jesus Christ that His disciples' faith was established; and it is by the eternal Resurrection of that body of truth in which the Word clothed Himself—that Resurrection in every

country, and in every age, and in every kind of mind, in spite of seal and soldier and the world's mocking incredulity—that the Deity of that Incarnate Word is manifested to-day. For those who "believe not for joy," whose critical faculty is sharpened by the terror that God's truth is too godlike to be true, as well as for the sons of Thomas who "was not with them when Jesus came," there remains for always, and will remain till the consummation of the world, that compelling miracle of the eternal life of the Creed, by which the weakness of God is seen to be stronger than men, and the foolishness of God wiser than men.

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side. Here am I, living still, after ten thousand deaths, as vital and as active as in the days of My weakness, with the very signs of failure become the signs of victory. Who is this that comes with dyed garments of Bozra? What think ye of Christ? . . . Whose Son is He? . . . Then be not faithless, but believing."

ROBERT HUGH BENSON.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book is an amplification of "conferences" which I have given at different times to Catholic undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge. During the course of more than a quarter of a century's work in the sacred ministry, both Catholics and Protestants have often consulted me as to where they might find set out in plain language, and at no too great length, the positive evidences for the truth of the Christian religion, and, above all, for the Divinity of Christ.

Again and again I have found myself unable to furnish the information for which I was asked. Large and learned works there are in abundance, but I do not know of any book which will give what is wanted in reasonable compass, without raising, and leaving unsettled, more questions than it answers.

From what I have been told by my brother priests, I have reason to think that many of them have had the same experience, and have felt the same need as myself. With the hope, therefore, that—to some minds, at least—I may afford assistance, I have ventured to print these pages, with the sincere regret that I have not

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known how to make them less unworthy of their sublime theme.

My object has been not so much to develop or elaborate a lengthy argument as to call attention to certain spiritual phenomena that none may safely ignore, which owe their existence to Jesus of Nazareth and proclaim His divine power. It has been my purpose to suggest a line of thought rather than to construct syllogisms or indulge overmuch in dialectic.

I have deemed it well and necessary to state as carefully and fully as possible whatever,—so far as I know,—may be urged with any degree of plausibility in contravention of my thesis. If in this matter there has been failure, it has not arisen from want of fairness nor from lack of desire on my part candidly and squarely to state all the conditions of the problem. I have done my best to look everything that may be brought forward on the other side full in the face, and, only after having done this, have I allowed myself to dwell on what seems to me the plain lesson of the facts.

It may perhaps be well here to state that the first chapter of this book, entitled "Faith and its Evidences," is only indirectly concerned with my general contention. It consists merely of a statement of the question at issue, together with a short exposition of the kind of evidence which may fairly be looked for by an educated

and reasonable man in support of the Christian Religion.

The reader is therefore asked kindly to regard this preliminary chapter in the light of a general introduction to the rest of the treatise. Its main object is to clear the decks, or rather the mind, for action. It can be omitted altogether, or read after the book has been finished, without any detriment to the course of the argument.

On the one hand, we have to avoid the Scylla of self-styled rationalism, which most irrationally refuses to believe anything the truth of which cannot be directly proved by what is termed "scientific" demonstration; whilst, on the other, we must always remember that, in the long-run, the Charybdis of a purely subjective pietism will be scarcely less perilous than rationalism itself to the safety of the voyager on the sea of life.

It should be obvious to all that by the foolish disparagement of reason the minds of men are actually prepared for atheism; for if reason is not to be heard, it is impossible either to prove, or defend by argument, even the primary truth of the existence of God. He alone may hope to pass unscathed between the rocks on either shore, who does not fear to use whatever measure of intelligence his Maker may have bestowed upon him, on behalf of revealed truth and of the supreme authority of Christ. In these days we

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have need not only *Fidei quærentis intellectum*, but also *intellectus quærentis Fidem*, if we are to escape the dangers that beset us on every side.

As this book is intended for the use of any ordinarily educated person who cares to follow its argument, I have done my best so to write it that it may throughout be intelligible to a reader without special knowledge of theology or history, who may very likely not be conversant with any language other than his own. Still, after quoting the Fathers of the Church, I have, for the most part, appended the actual text in a footnote.[1] This I have done, not in a spirit of pedantry, but because I feel that those, who are competent to do so, may naturally wish to check my vernacular rendering by comparison with the words of the authority to which I appeal. The limitations of space, however, sometimes prevented me from giving the original, especially in the case of the longer quotations. But I have been careful always in my translation to reproduce the exact sense of the author whose words I cite. Such of my readers as may not be acquainted with Latin or Greek will, I trust, bear with these ancient languages when they meet their eyes in a footnote, and not count them

[1] Every quotation from the Fathers I have taken from the edition of Migne.

as an offence. They can leave these notes alone, or, at any rate, such part of them as are not printed in English.

There will, no doubt, be some who will not care to peruse the rather long patristic quotations to be found in the third and fourth chapters. Such omission will in no way interfere with the comprehension of the book as a whole.

These quotations from the early Fathers of the Church are, I am well aware, not essential to my central thesis concerning the correspondence of the Catholic Religion with the design of Christ, as foreshadowed by His words recorded in the Gospels. Therefore I hesitated as to whether I should, or should not, use this corroborative evidence from antiquity. But after much consideration, I judged it well, so far as may be practicable, thus to strengthen my argument, since it seems desirable to seize every opportunity that may offer to point out how unhistorical is the assertion that the Catholic Church of to-day is not identical with the Church of the first Christian centuries.

If Catholicism is effectively to witness to Christ in the sphere of apologetics, it is important to demonstrate, not only from the testimony of Scripture, but also from the pages of history, that the living Faith is no mediæval or Tridentine aftermath, contrary to the intention,

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and foreign to the Spirit, of the Founder of Christianity.

My aim has been first to look at the Mustard Tree as it is to be seen all over the world at the present time, and then to consider the Seed from which the great Tree has sprung. But it is also a matter of much interest to glance at that same Tree as it appeared during the early years of its persistent and harmonious growth in the soil that was prepared for it by the Providence of God.

This book is addressed to busy men and women of English speech who are seeking the kingdom of heaven in sincerity,—to those who are yearning after God if haply they may find Him, as well as to others who have long since —it may be from the first dawn of reason— found their Lord in His Holy Church. To all, then, who are seeking, as well as to those who have found, the divine Revelation in its entirety, I make bold to offer this volume. I cherish the hope that it may, in some measure, aid them more vividly to recognize the strength of one, out of the many converging lines of proof available to-day, which are of a nature overwhelmingly sufficient, at least in conjunction one with another, to establish intellectual certainty in our minds as to the Godhead of our Lord.

Most especially do I pray that what I have

written may be of help to some whose hearts are heavy with the most grievous of all trials that can beset the soul of man—serious difficulty concerning the truth of Supernatural Religion. May they learn that others, too, who have been plunged in the same fiery furnace of temptation, have come forth with conviction as to the Truth and Grace given by Jesus Christ, hardened in the very flames through which, by the Mercy of God, they have passed unscorched.

"Did we not cast three men into the fire?" So was it asked of old. And "they answered the king, and said: 'True, O king.' He answered and said: 'Behold, I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire; and there is no hurt in them, and the Form of the Fourth is like the Son of God.'"

Never, for one moment, does our Lord abandon,—though for a time He may be hidden from their sight,—any of His children who strive, in simplicity of purpose and honesty of heart, unflinchingly to yield to the guidance of reason and the promptings of conscience.

These in the end shall say with His servants of old:

"Praise and exalt the Lord God above all for ever; for He hath delivered us from hell, and saved us out of the hand of death, and delivered us out of the midst of the burning flame, and saved us out of the midst of the fire. Oh, give

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thanks to the Lord, because He is good, for His Mercy endureth for ever" (Dan. iii. 88, 92).

But, first, there must be,—for God asks it,—the honest striving, the readiness for self-sacrifice, the sincere and simple determination to follow whithersoever reason may guide the faltering feet, and conscience urge the flagging steps—however astonishingly unforeseen, and, it may be, unwelcome, appear the goal. The calm like to the calm of heaven, the security of the harbour, though near at hand and well known to the pilot who is guiding the boat, is often unsuspected by a stranger to the coast, who is still tempest-tossed by the raging waters of the ocean.

> *And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

Should the argument of this book serve, with the blessing of God, to establish, or even to strengthen, the Faith in but one soul, I shall be abundantly rewarded.

There is no misery upon this earth that may be compared with the misery of negation, which is the hopeless darkness of despair; for by a law of its constitution the mind of man is athirst, craving the knowledge of its Maker. "This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee, the One true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast

sent." On the other hand, there is no happiness that is more than as dust, when weighed in the balance with the happiness which came to Simon Peter by the shores of the tranquil Galilæan Lake; to Martha at the open grave of Lazarus, her brother; to the Magdalen in the garden of the sepulchre on the Resurrection morning; and to Mary Most Holy, as she knelt in loving adoration before her Lord and Saviour. This happiness may be shared by all those who, with the Church of every age, and with all the Saints, confess that He, whom their sins once crucified, is their God and their Redeemer.

"The greatest glory of a building," writes Ruskin, "is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity." Such we feel to be part of the glory of Catholicism. Yet the glory of the Divinity of the Church of God is greater than the glory of even her Humanity. The greatest glory of *this* building is to be found in the Glory of its Builder.

If, then, there be a house visible on the earth to-day, of which the foundations have in truth been laid by Mary's Son;—if that house has required the power of Him, who in the beginning created all things, not only to build it, but also through the long ages to sustain it, and at this

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very hour to fortify its walls and towers against the stress of storms unceasing; then, surely, the conclusion is inevitable. The Builder of that house is none other than the one true God.

Inspired Scripture assures us (Heb. iii. 3) that our Lord Jesus Christ is "worthy of greater glory than Moses, by so much as he that hath built the house has greater honour than the house, for every house is built by someone, but He that hath built all things is God." Even so, when we contemplate the Divine Work in our midst, peace from Heaven takes possession of our souls, and whole-heartedly we avow:—Every house built with hands is built by someone, but He that hath built this house of His Holy Church has honour greater than Socrates and Moses, and than Solomon in all his glory; greater far than all the sages and all the builders who have built before Him in the time that is past, or who, coming after Him, shall build in all the time that is yet to be—for He has built all things—He is God.

Πλείονος γὰρ οὗτος δόξης παρὰ Μωϋσῆν ἠξίωται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν· πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπό τινος, ὁ δὲ πάντα κατασκευάσας, Θεός.

O. R. VASSALL-PHILLIPS, C. SS. R.

Bishop Eton,
Liverpool.

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The Mustard Tree

I

FAITH AND ITS EVIDENCES

The First Book.

THE thought of the first book that ever sprang from the brain of a man must always possess a fascination for mankind. It may be that we find ourselves in some great library, where the ideas of humanity lie stored. Perhaps it is the British Museum. We look around, and as we gaze upon the hexagonal, cylinder-shaped volumes of old Babylon, or examine the yet more ancient clay-baked cones covered with archaic characters, written—so we are told—about six thousand five hundred years ago, they thrill us with the romance of the mighty past. Once more we look, and now, only a few yards distant, autograph manuscripts of Scott, Macaulay, Tennyson, George Eliot, and Cardinal Newman — famous names of yesterday—arrest the eye.

Kenilworth, *Adam Bede*, and the *Idylls of the King*, in all their modernity, are there, almost jostling against the dim records of a prehistoric civilization. There, too, under the same roof as long-forgotten chronicles of dead dynas-

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ties, is a living page of the *Dream of Gerontius*, in the beautiful handwriting of the great master of our English Israel. Lovingly, and with gratitude too deep for words that our lot is cast in Christendom rather than in Babylonia—that the Christian faith, the Christian hope, is ours to-day, or may be ours to-morrow, we scan the immortal lines:

> "Dear Angel, say,
> Why have I now no fear of meeting Him?
> Along my earthly life, the thought of death
> And judgment was to me most terrible.
> I had it aye before me, and I saw
> The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.
> Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled."

THE ages pass. Men and women enter, play their part, make their bow, and leave the stage. All, even the most famous of the players, vanish from our sight for ever. But their books are deathless, and through those books their inmost thoughts lie open for all who care to read, and testify to the essential unity of human life and aspiration.

In some such fashion we may be pondering and philosophizing within ourselves, when of a sudden the imagination swiftly wanders back through many ages of man's eventful story to the very beginning of literature. We try to conjure up that hour when, for the first time in the annals of our race, some simple

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narrative was committed in rudely picturesque, hieroglyphic symbols to stone or papyrus, or possibly to the bark of trees in a virgin forest, and the primitive effort achieved success. The consecutive argument, however elementary, was so recorded as to invite the attention of the passer-by. The fugitive fancy was safely captured, and then embodied in an enduring home. It was secured that the deed of heroism should not remain unsung, that the romantic tale should live on rather than tamely die with its creator.

Amongst all other Books the Gospels stand alone.

But of the books of the whole world, there are four which stand out, pre-eminent in their tremendous import for every one of us. To those who love them they are known as the Holy Gospels. Amongst all the books that have till now been written, and amongst all the books that remain for men yet to write, who does not feel that these four Books must always occupy a place of their own, unique and separate, which will hardly admit of question or challenge? None will be found so rash as to deny that they have touched and inspired, soothed and subjugated, the hearts and minds of men, as no other literary achievement whatsoever. Again and again they changed the whole current of human lives; they have even diverted and controlled the destiny of nations. For a vast multitude the

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Gospels have spoken the last word as to the conduct of life. From them, rightly understood, there lies no appeal in the court of the Christian conscience. No comparison can be instituted between these four Books and the greatest triumphs of the imaginative faculty, or between them and any exposition, even the most brilliant, of any system of philosophy, or of any scientific discovery, however far-reaching in its consequences to humanity.

For they tell us of Christ.

If we set ourselves to the solving of the problem as to why it is that the Gospels hold their predominant position, the answer is not far to seek. Their sway is not due to any special grace or distinction of style. From this point of view, their charm lies in their simplicity. They are unstudied in expression and unadorned with rhetorical device. Yet none can doubt that they will endure as long as human thought persists, and exercise unrivalled influence to the end of time. For this, one reason only can be assigned. They tell of the life and death, of the resurrection and ascension, of the words and works, and of the promises of Jesus Christ.

Here, and here alone, we may find the secret of the hidden power, otherwise inexplicable, wielded through the long centuries by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Jesus of Nazareth is the centre of all their

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His claim to show God to men.

interest, and gives them all their strange significance.

Now, in one of the fateful Gospel dialogues we read how the great Teacher, who had recently gathered a body of disciples round about Him, declared shortly before His death that He was about to prepare a place for them in His "Father's House, where there are many mansions." On this, one of these disciples (Thomas by name) protested that he knew not how to find the way to be with Christ in the House of God. Whereupon Jesus said, first to his questioner:

> "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life";

and then, to all:

> "If you had known Me, you would, without doubt, have known My Father also, and *you have seen Him*."

Philip of Bethsaida, another disciple, hearing these words, and not understanding their import, exclaimed impetuously:

> "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us."

This will ever remain the instinctive cry of the human heart. It voices the pathetic yearning of the creature for the Creator, of the finite

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for the Infinite, of the son for the Father,—the supplication of man to God.[1]

A modern Agnostic has written of Him, as, "that behind nature, which ever eludes." For one who "knows not" he writes truly, so long as there is no efficacious desire to know. But for all who cry with Philip, "Lord, show us the Father," the heavens are unveiled in due season. God revealed Himself to men of old by degrees, partially, "by divers portions, and in divers manners,"[2] and at length has finally "spoken to us in His Son, . . . through whom also He made the worlds, who is the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and sustaineth all things by the word of His power."[3]

We shall do well, then, to ponder the answer that Jesus made to His disciple, for it contains the answer to the longing of all the years:

"Am I so long time with thee and hast thou

[1] John xiv. 5-9. Lockhart relates that Sir Walter Scott, a few weeks before his death, after all hope of recovery had been abandoned, one day desired to be drawn into the library and placed by the central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. "Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he [Sir Walter, the man of many books] said: 'Need you ask? There is but one.' I chose the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel." (Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. v., p. 423.)

[2] πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως.

[3] Heb. i. 1, 3.

not known Me, Philip? He, that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."[1]

Already He had said to His Apostles:

"You have seen the Father."

Now He explains His mysterious saying, so that no further misunderstanding as to His meaning may be possible:

"He, that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."

Faith in the Divinity of Christ.

In these words we find the tremendous statement that the Son of Man is the Son of God. "Our faith" in this mystery—in the Divinity of Jesus Christ—was declared, even in Apostolic days, already to have "overcome the world."[2]

This is the belief which has created the religion known by the name of Christianity; which has changed the whole outlook of the human race, and taught men to believe that, as God has deigned to become partaker of their nature, so they may hope to become partakers of His Nature,[3]—that since God has come down to earth, earth may now be raised to God.

[1] John xiv. 9, Ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ, ἑώρακεν τὸν Πατέρα.

[2] "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5).

[3] 2 Pet. i. 4, Θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως. Hence the Church prays at every offering of the Holy Sacrifice: "Deus qui humanæ substantiæ dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti et mirabilius reformasti; da nobis per hujus aquæ et vini

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"On earth God, in heaven man." With these few but noble words the soaring mind of Chrysostom sums up the burden of the Evangel of Christ.[1]

This is the faith which has quickened the pulsations of the blood and kindled the fires of sane enthusiasm for all things high and noble

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mysterium, ejus Divinitatis esse consortes, qui humanitatis nostræ fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus, Filius tuus, Dominus noster." And again, in the Ascension Preface: "ut nos Divinitatis suæ tribueret esse participes."

Bishop Challoner, in his *Meditation for the Festival of the Annunciation*, writes as follows: "Thus was celebrated, in the Virgin's womb, the sacred wedding of our human nature with the divine Person of the Son of God, to the feast of which we are invited. . . . The Incarnation of the Son of God is the source of all our good; in making God Man it has made Man God." *Cf.* "Factus est Deus Homo, ut Homo fieret Deus" (Appendicis Sermo, cxxviii., *In Natali Domini*, xii. inter opera S. Augustini). We are reminded of the "secret" prayer in the Mass for Christmas night: "Accepta tibi sit, Domine, quæsumus, hodiernæ festivitatis oblatio; ut, tuâ gratiâ largiente, per hæc sacrosancta commercia, in illius inveniamur formâ, in quo nostra tecum est substantia," etc. Petavius (*De Trin.*, lib. vi., cap. xi.) quotes Marius Victorinus, as writing against Arius: "Homo non imago Dei, sed secundum Imaginem. Solus enim Jesus Imago Dei; homo autem secundum Imaginem; hoc est imago Imaginis." So St. Ambrose warns us (*De Fide*, lib. i., cap. iv., and lib. v., cap. iii.): "Nisi per Imaginem Dei, ad imaginem Dei esse non potes" (*cf.* Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3; Gen. i. 27. In this last passage, "To the Image of God, He created him," many of the Fathers see a reference to the Eternal Word).

[1] In Evang. Matt. Homil., i. 4: Θεὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ἄνθρωπος ἐν οὐρανῷ.

and lovely and of good report. This it is which has set up standards of splendour, that were first fashioned in the heavens, for man to follow after with lifelong striving, as, for example, the ideal of charity. "In this have we known His Love, in that He laid down His life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for our brethren. Beloved, if God hath thus loved us, we also are bound to love one another."[1]

This is the faith from which has sprung strength for the weak, and hope for the hopeless, which has cheered the bed of sickness with divine comfort, which has given rest to the weary and the footsore, and brought the wounded peace, such as this world can neither give to its own nor take away from the sons of God.

"I believe in Jesus Christ." In this short sentence we find the inspiration of the lives of millions upon millions of Christian people. And when the sands of life are running out, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ still makes the sun to shine within the passing soul. From the everlasting shore rays of heavenly light have illumined the last hours of an unnumbered multitude. Without fear or faltering, His servants launch forth upon the dark waters that encompass the world, with serene confidence in the thought of their Saviour's Name, which, to those who believe, is as a sweet song in the ear, as

[1] 1 John iii. 16 and iv. 11.

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wondrous honey in the mouth, as heavenly dew upon the soul and balm of Gilead in the heart.

Scio cui credidi. I know in whom I have reposed my faith, and in whom I have trusted. These words of the Apostle of the Gentiles shall ever ring true with their strange note of gladness and of peaceful triumph, raised up to high Heaven, even to the consummation of the world.

Our happiness in this life, our hope for the life to come, our knowledge and our love of God—in a word, all that makes living tolerable, and going hence desirable,—"to be with Christ, which is far better"—all depend upon our belief in Jesus of Nazareth.

His claim to be one with the Father, before Abraham was created.

This faith, in the last analysis, rests upon the validity of the claim made long ago by a man living amongst men in a little province of the Roman Empire.

"Before Abraham was, I am."[1]

Nothing short of this is the assertion of Him who was born of Mary the Virgin, and was crucified by the Jews under Pontius Pilate, Cæsar's Procurator. As to His meaning there can be no doubt. He spoke thus, because the Jews had asked Him:

[1] Πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι, ἐγὼ εἰμι. Literally, "Before Abraham came into existence." Γενέσθαι is translated in the Vulgate by *fieret* (John viii. 58).

"Whom dost Thou make Thyself? . . . Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?"[1]

Shortly after this episode, Christ said solemnly:

"I and the Father are one."

On both occasions the Jews took up stones to stone Him. On the second they declared:

"For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."[2]

For all Christians Christ is, and must ever remain, the ultimate manifestation of God.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish; but may have life everlasting.

For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."[3]

[1] John viii. 53-57.
[2] John x. 31-33. *Cf.* Mark xiv. 64; Luke xxii. 71.
[3] John iii. 14, 16.

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These familiar words will ever express the Christian hope, founded on the sure promises of Christ.

And He said to Martha:

> "Everyone that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this?"[1]

Once more, first to His disciples, and through them to us all:

> "You believe in God, believe also in Me."[2]

Nor is it in accordance with the facts to allege that St. John stands by himself amongst the Evangelists in his assertion that Christ put forth this claim to be one with His Father—to be God.

The Divinity of Christ asserted in each of the Gospels.

In the earlier Gospels, also, we find many mysterious statements of like tenor to that recorded by St. Matthew:

> "No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him."[3]

And this, in close conjunction with the invitation, which could rightly come from God alone:

[1] John xi. 26. [2] John xiv. 1. [3] Matt. xi. 27.

> "Come unto Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is sweet and My burden is light."[1]

In such words as these, it is impossible not to recognize the force of a divine appeal. No mere man dare speak thus, as no mere man dare say to his fellows:

> "It was said to them of old time [by God] . . . *but I say to you.*"[2]

To Jesus Christ the high-priest spoke solemnly:

> "I adjure Thee by the Living God that Thou tell us, if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

And He answered:

> "Thou hast said it."[3]

On this account was He taken to Pilate, and this was the accusation brought against Him:

> "We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."[4]

[1] Matt. xi. 28-30. [2] *Cf.* Matt. v. 21-44.
[3] Matt. xxvi. 63-66; *cf.* Luke xxii. 66-71.
[4] John xix. 7.

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The issue is knit. The claim is clear. It must be either rejected or accepted. No third course is possible, for in this matter to ignore is to reject.

> "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth."[1]

This is the warning of the Christ.

His Gospel is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."[2]

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[3]

Faith, then, in Christianity is faith in Jesus Christ, faith in the word of Him who is the Word of God—in all that He has revealed.

Faith in the Divinity of Christ a gift of God.

BUT we are told by the unbeliever that this faith is a chimera, a delusive fancy, nothing more substantial than some will-o'-the-wisp, a baseless foundation on which no thoughtful person can rest contentedly.

If we take up this challenge, as we surely may, without the misgiving of a moment, we shall find it laid down in the Christian Scriptures that our faith in the Divinity of our Lord and in

[1] Matt. xii. 30. [2] Mark i. 1. [3] John i. 1.

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His teaching is a special gift of God. "Flesh and blood" does not reveal Him to man, but His "Father who is in heaven."[1]

But also in accordance with reason, itself also a gift of God.

This fact, however, in no way hinders us either from knowing ourselves or from proving to others, who will accord us a hearing, that it is most *reasonable* to believe in Christ and in the revelation which He has given to the world. Not only Christian doctrine in itself, but also supernatural faith, in the mode of its exercise, is in complete harmony with all the analogies of nature and experience.

Objective reality of the external world and of the truths of faith.

The gift of faith, the faculty of spiritual vision, is analogous to the gift of sight in the natural order of creation.[2] With the eyes of the body we behold the world outside us; with the eye of the soul illumined by faith we behold Jesus Christ our God, and know the dogmatic

[1] Matt. xvi. 17; *cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 3; Philip. i. 29; 1 John iv. 3. *Cf.* Dom Guéranger (*L'Année Liturgique*, vol. iii. p. 400): "Le Saint Esprit crée la foi dans nos âmes, et par la foi nous obtenons la vie éternelle; car la foi n'est pas l'adhésion a une thèse rationellement démontrée, mais une vertu qui procède de la volonté fécondée par la grâce."

[2] *Cf.* The unknown author of the treatise *De Sacramentis*, to be found among the works of St. Ambrose (lib. iii., cap. i., 11, 12): "Considera et tu oculos cordis tui. Videbas quæ corporalia sunt, corporalibus oculis; sed quæ sacramentorum sunt, cordis oculis adhuc videre non poteras." So also St. Augustine (*Epistola*, cxx.): "Habet namque fides oculos suos, quibus quodammodo videt verum esse quod nondum videt, et quibus certissime videt nondum se videre quod credit."

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assertions of His revelation to belong to the body of objective truth.

> "O world invisible, we view thee;
> O world intangible, we touch thee;
> O world unknowable, we know thee;
> Inapprehensible, we clutch thee."[1]

But just as the external world does not depend for its existence upon our power of seeing it—the fragrant flowers and the perfumed pines, the kine lowing in the pleasant fields, the babbling brooks, the rushing river, the torrent from the mountain-side, the restful lakes are there all day and every day, whether we see them or not—so also with the solemn realities of the spiritual world disclosed to the eye of faith. They exist, independently of the apprehension of mankind.

Beauties of Nature real, notwithstanding the existence of the blind.

Some there are who have been born blind; who can never behold the marvels of Nature visible to all beside; for whom dale and upland and peaceful meadow can never be a source of lifelong or even of passing gladness; who may never feast their gaze in rapture upon the woods in autumn, or watch either the riot or the repose of the great deep; who have no need to screen their dazzled eyes from the blaze of the glorious noonday; who can never look upon the wonder of the dawn, or the glory of the stars at night, or the lights and shadows of the evening

[1] Francis Thompson, "In No Strange Land."

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sunset. And there are others who, through accident, disease, or advancing years, become, except for the power of memory, as they who have never seen at all. Yet Nature lives around them, though they can never hope to see her face and catch her smile once more.

So truths of faith are independent of their recognition by any individual.

Now, there is, unhappily, yet another kind of blindness. In the supernatural order also there are many who have never seen, and some who have lost their sight; who have retreated into the encircling clouds, and become enveloped in a darkness that may be felt; who have given up their faith, and, as far as may be, extinguished its light.[1]

[1] The analogy between the light which God gave in the beginning in the natural order, and the supernatural light which He bestows through Christ, is thus expressed by St. Paul: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 6). This light seems to be associated by some of the Fathers with the baptismal seal. This seal, which, although grace may be lost, is itself imperishable, is, according to St. Thomas, impressed on the intellectual part of the soul; whilst grace, though infused into the substance of the soul, displays its action chiefly in the will, wherein alone sanctity resides. St. Ambrose writes: "Spiritu signamur, ut splendorem atque imaginem ejus et gratiam tenere possimus, quod est utique spiritale signaculum. Nam etsi specie signamur in corpore, veritate tamen in corde signamur, ut Spiritus Sanctus exprimat in nobis imaginis cœlestis effigiem" (*De Spiritu Sancto*, i. 6, 79). St. Cyril of Alexandria argues thus (*De SS. Trin. Dial.*, v., 554): κατεσφραγίσμεθα γὰρ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι πρὸς ἐμφέρειαν καὶ

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We must, however, always remember that in none of the baptized can the eclipse ever be absolutely and irretrievably total, or the shining from above be so utterly obscured that it may not one day again burst through the enshrouding gloom. Christian faith is a supernatural endowment. The baptismal *character*, the *signum fidei*, is permanent, and cannot be lost. "The calling and gifts of God are without repentance."[1] Squandered they may be as to their exercise and use, yet the hand of the Creator

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ὁμοίωσιν τοῦ προσώπου τοῦ Πατρὸς, *τουτέστι τοῦ Υἱοῦ* ("We have been sealed in the Holy Ghost to the likeness and resemblance of the Face of the Father, that is of the Son"). The Face of the Father is Light. The Son is Light. He Himself declared that He was "the Light which hath come into the world" (John iii. 19). His Apostle has taught us that He is "the true Light (*τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν*), who enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9). This He does by the light of reason (*similitudo veritatis increatæ*), without the possession of which man could not reason at all. But in raising us to the supernatural order, He bestows upon us His own uncreated light and truth. This light (not, of course, full, but lessened, so that we may be able to bear it), when received in the intelligence and accepted by the will (through grace), breaks forth into its acts, after the truths of faith have been received "by hearing" (Rom. x. 17). Thus it is none other than the Son of God Himself who teaches us, both by *interior illumination* and by *exterior authority*, and so is "our one Master, Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 10). For a remarkable passage on the *Sigillatio Verbi*, see St. Methodius (*Convivium Decem Virginum*, *Orat.* viii.). *Cf.* also Dion. Areop. (*De Eccl. Hier.*, iii. 3).

[1] *ἀμεταμέλητα* (Rom. xi. 29).

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withdraws nothing, beyond hope of recovery so long as the state of probation lasts, of that which He has once bestowed upon His intelligent creature, whom He made after His own image and likeness, redeemed by His Son, and sanctified by His grace.

But even upon those who have received the gift of faith in Baptism there may fall, through their own fault, such an overshadowing cloud of darkness as to produce in the end a kind of spiritual paralysis, which may be compared in its effects upon the soul to some strange blinding fog upon the visual organs of the body.

External phenomena of the Faith analogous to those of Nature.

Round about are echoing the harmonies of revealed religion. To those who will give ear and listen, heavenly voices gently whisper their message of the supernatural. The august presence of the heir of the Fisherman, the kindly medicine of the sacrament of forgiveness, the Bread that cometh down from heaven, the clouds of incense rising before the tabernacle of God, the music of the sacring-bell, the raising of the Sacred Host, the anointing of the weary members that have been the shrine of the soul during her earthly pilgrimage,—all bear their witness to the world-wide Church, "adorned as a Bride for her Husband," with her unfailing service of healing and consolation on behalf of the children of men. The picture of the Mother

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and the Child, set amidst the flickering gleam of tapers, charms to rest all fretfulness of mind and heart, whilst the murmur of the rosary falls gently upon the ear, as some great multitude kneels in prayer, and the sweet refrain of numbered *Aves* pays dutiful homage to the tender ministries of the Incarnation. In varying degree and measure, a thousand holy rites and touching ceremonies give testimony to the City let down from heaven, and preach the Gospel of Christ,—the glad tidings that He is Emmanuel,—God with us indeed,—who delights still to dwell with the children of men.

In short, the world of faith has its own characteristic mysteries, corresponding to those of the world of sense, but transcending them, even as the spirit rises superior to the flesh. Yet all may be by us unseen, unheard,—at least unrecognized.

Revealed truth, however, remains eternally true, though to some its heavenly beauty be no longer visible; though those there are to whom—its meaning lost—like a language long forgotten, it fails to bear its message as of old.

In like manner, the universe is still in ordered existence, notwithstanding the lack of appreciation of the blind and the obtuseness of the fool.

The light of the sun in itself is one thing. It is another as perceptibly impressed upon the eyes of a man.

Similarly, the true Light exists in Himself, independently of us, although He deigns in Baptism to impress His own light upon the souls of the baptized.

"A man," writes St. Augustine, "may lose his gold against his will; against his will he may lose his very dwelling-place. One thing he cannot lose, save by his own choosing. His faith no man shall lose, unless faith he shall have first despised."[1]

Since then the gift of faith can be lost only through our own culpable act, it becomes a duty of prudence to guard that divine gift far more carefully than we should protect even the eyes of the body from all danger and injury. As Catholics know well, this we may do primarily by prayer,[2] which is as the breathing of the soul, and by approaching the sacraments, which are as its food and medicine. We preserve our faith undimmed, through living as the faith would have us live. In the very act of relying upon that faith, unconsciously we test its truth and

[1] "Cætera potest tibi auferre inimicus invito. Hoc (*i.e.*, credere) auferre non potest nisi volenti . . . volens habere aurum, perdet aurum, et volens habere domum perdet domum. Fidem nemo perdet, nisi qui spreverit" (*Enar. in Ps.* lv.).

[2] "Ergo ut oremus, credamus; et, ut ipsa non deficiat fides, quâ oramus, oremus. Fides fundit orationem, fusa oratio fidei impetrat firmitatem" (S. August., *Sermo*, cxv., i.).

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The Catholic religion is its own subjective evidence.

value, and, in proportion as we rely upon its support, shall we find that it never fails us.

In effect, our religion becomes, to those who use it, one of its own evidences. We know experimentally that the practice of the Faith sustains our spiritual life, even as we know by experience that the bread we eat nourishes the life of the body.

Harmony of reason and faith.

Without the testimony and corroboration of the senses reason does not suffice to prove the objective reality of the external world. Even less can we expect human reason to be adequate *alone* to demonstrate the truths of divine revelation. At the same time, it is certain that our faith is in the fullest harmony with our reason, which in its own proper sphere of operation is to be used and trusted, as one of the best gifts of God to man.

Luther taught, with fatal results, that faith should seek no support from reason. And, even at the present day, too often a non-Catholic child is told by his teacher that it is wicked to ask why the Bible and Christianity are to be accepted as the revelation of God. By such a refusal to answer legitimate inquiry, the seed is early sown from which will be gathered, in its own season, the full crop of infidelity.

Lamentable, indeed, must be the issue when the application of a purely subjective and idealistic system of philosophy to life and religion

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Importance of emphasizing the objectivity of both natural and supernatural truths.

is carried out to its logical conclusion. Set such ideas to work, and too probably the consequence will be some roomy doctrine of justification by faith only, and the intellectual bankruptcy which may be seen around us in the current Protestantism of the day.

Few things can, in the event, lead to more disastrous results than a divorce between faith and reason. For those who acquiesce in such an unnatural separation, faith will have no reasonable basis, and conduct will possess no sanction beyond that which each individual may choose for himself, according to his own fancy. Hence, the Catholic Church has ever recognized the supreme importance of satisfying all reverent inquiry, and has always been the consistent champion of the rights of the human reason. Reason should minister to religion. Religion will in return raise reason to heights of which the unbeliever cannot so much as dream.

The motives of credibility.

FOR those who have not yet received the gift of faith, or who, sad to say, have lost that gift, it is a duty to investigate the *præambula fidei*, or presuppositions of the Faith, in order to be assured of the reasonableness of belief. As divine grace presupposes human nature, even so does a formal act of faith presuppose, at least ordinarily, a knowledge of the *credibility* of religious truth. "A man could

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Function of reason to find the Divine Teacher, having tested and recognized the validity of His claims to credibility.

not believe," writes St. Thomas, "unless he should see that belief ought rightly to be given."[1]

In the darkness of the night the traveller may not dispense with the flicker of the lantern, as, cautiously, he threads his way to some yet distant house, dimly seen in the far-off country. But when the day breaks, the lantern's aid is no longer needed in the glory of the sunrise. And, even before morning comes, he has ceased to require its help, so soon as he finds himself safe, at home, in the palace of a king. Such a palace is the Church of the Living God, flooded with light from heaven. Though the entrance to this palace may, even for some long while, be hidden from the pilgrim's view, it can surely at last be reached by the use of reason and common sense. Its harmonious beauty and the fulness of its peace are, however, only to be ours, when we enter the radiance that gladdens those who dwell in peace within its open doors.

And for Catholics also, safely housed in the home of truth and certainty, it may well remain a matter of the deepest interest, as it is of the greatest value, to examine from time to time the external grounds of reason on which their intellectual conviction of the reality of the Faith may rest, as distinct from the internal, supernatural

[1] "Non crederet [fidelis], nisi videret ea esse credenda." *Summa*, 2^a, 2^{ae}, a 4, ad 2.

testimony of the Spirit of God to the spirit of the believing Christian.

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Is Christ the Divine Teacher?

SINCE faith in Christianity is faith in Christ, it cannot be stated too clearly or too strongly, that the evidences for the credibility of Christianity necessarily resolve themselves into evidence for the credibility of Christ. It is of paramount importance to realize this from the very outset.

All hangs upon the answer to this question.

Is the Son of Mary the Lord God Almighty,—One with the Father from all Eternity? This is the central question, upon the answer to which depends the truth of the Christian religion. Proof is needed for one fact only—the Divinity of Christ. Once be certain that Christ is God, and there should no longer be any place in the mind for doubt, either as to the doctrines which Christ has taught, or as to the authority of the Church which Christ has founded, and to which He promised His perpetual presence and the guidance of His Spirit.

A man may well be ennobled by the lifelong pursuit of scientific or historical truth. Far more does the seeking after supernatural knowledge—after the knowledge of God—that is, after God Himself—elevate and give dignity to his days. But where there is question of religion, inasmuch as the truth of specific doctrines

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cannot be verified by experiment, the search for truth means searching for a Teacher who is divine. For those who have already found such a Teacher, search is not only superfluous, but is actually impossible. No man can seek for a gift which he has safely received, unless it have been either cast away or lost. Nor need they who have not yet found that rich treasure spend a lifetime in the search for religious truth. If only the searcher will be content patiently to look around him for a little while, he will soon discover—it may be to his great wonderment—that the evidence which he is seeking has been near him all the time, and on every side. The gift is there for the asking. The splendid endowment may be his, if he will but look first to heaven, then to earth, bend his pride, and let God place the possession in his hand.[1]

In any investigation of the grounds of faith, it must never be forgotten that, in accepting or rejecting truths of the moral order, the will plays no small part, since the will always has the power to command, suspend, or refuse the assent of the intelligence to the *data* presented by the mind.

The nature of faith to trust the word of another.

It is, above all, necessary that we should carefully bear in mind the nature of faith.

[1] "Posside cum Illo fidem. Pauper est, sed magnam possessionem habet fidem" (S. August., *Sermo*, xli., 2).

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When we exercise faith we do not attempt to *prove* that which we believe, as by a mathematical demonstration, or through the evidence of our own senses, but *we trust the word of another*. This is essential to faith, as opposed to sight. When we *believe*, we do not *see* the mysteries of our religion, nor are we convinced of the truth of the Christian dogmas by means of any intrinsic proofs of their real accordance with fact.[1] They do not become self-evident, but must always remain obscure to us ("quoad nos") so long as we remain upon this earth. Nor is the *possibility* of doubt (unreasonable and imprudent though doubt would be) precluded, as it is shut out, for example, by the solution of a problem in Euclid. Faith is declared to be "the evidence of things which we do not see."[2]

If, then, the certainty of faith arises neither from *seeing*, nor from abstract reasoning, it can come only from trusting the sure testimony of one whose word is known to be trustworthy.

Human Faith.

Human faith consists in trusting the word of a man.

Divine Faith.

Divine faith consists in trusting the word of God.

Christian Faith.

To exercise *Christian* faith is to trust the word of Christ, *because Christ is believed to be God.*

[1] *Cf.* S. Thomas *in 1 Cor. xv.*, lect. i.: "Ibi incipit articulus Fidei, ubi deficit ratio."

[2] Heb. xi. 1, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

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Therefore, the faith of the Christian in the word of Christ is without any reservations whatsoever:

> "If we receive the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater."[1]

I may receive the testimony of my fellow-man as to some only of his statements, whilst I reserve my freedom to reject and disbelieve the others. If I am to act in accordance with the dictates of my reason, I must believe my God in all things.

Catholic Faith.

The Christian Faith and the Catholic Faith are, for the fully instructed Christian, synonymous terms. When, however, we speak of the *Catholic* Faith we wish to lay stress upon the fact that, on account of our trust in the word and in the promises of Christ, we submit our minds to the teaching of Christ's Church. The *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church* of the Creed is the complement and the consequence of the *I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Faith a choice.

The faith of Catholics is far indeed from being some vague, ill-considered sentiment or emotion. It is an (explicitly or implicitly) reasoned act of the will. "Faith," writes St. Theresa, "resides in the intellect, and is exercised by the will." It is therefore a deliberate choice. I can choose whether I

[1] 1 John v. 9.

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will, or will not, believe the word of my fellow-man. I can also choose whether I will, or will not, believe the word of Christ.[1] His appeal is one that is personal and intimate, made to the individual soul. No man can fasten his own responsibility on to his fellow. Each one has to face the question for himself . . . and choose. Upon the momentous choice hang the issues of life or death, of time and of eternity.

Cumulative weight of the Christian evidences.

NOW, on proceeding to examine the evidences for the truth of Christianity—that is to say, for the Divinity of our Lord (and consequently for His absolute credibility)—we shall find that they are cumulative in their force.

Appeal of the Person of Christ.

In the first place, the unique isolation of the character of Christ, as depicted in the Gospels, has appealed in every age to many of the world's profoundest thinkers. The phenomenon of Jesus of Nazareth is the most baffling of all the Agnostic difficulties. He at least cannot be dismissed out of hand.

[1] "Profecto fides in potestate nostrâ est" (S. August., *De Spiritu et Litterâ*, lib. i. 54). It must not, however, be forgotten that the Catholic Church has always taught that the aid of divine grace is necessary in order to constitute an act of *supernatural* faith. As soon as it is seen that the Christian Faith is *reasonable*, and, consequently, *credible* (something which a rational human being *ought* to believe), it becomes a most urgent duty to pray to God for that grace, which, to those who ask, is never refused.

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Esoteric Buddhism—Buddhism in its innermost teaching—is, so we are often assured, a sublime philosophy. Admittedly, it is nothing higher. It is simply a method or an opinion, not a creed.

Mohammedanism is a great external polity, and has not only a code of ethics, furnishing a rule of life for its disciples, but also imposes upon them profound, oft-expressed worship of the One Supreme Being.

Christianity gives all this and much more to those who accept its claims; but beyond everything else it is, distinctively, the direct, conscious relation of one person to Another, who claims to be the living God made Man. Here at least it remains absolutely without parallel amongst the religions of the world.

No true Buddhist will attempt to speak to Gautama, who, as he believes, has long since entered into Nirvâna; no Mohammedan addresses in terms of reverent supplication the Prophet, whom above all others he holds in honour; no voices raised in prayer call upon Confucius or Zoroaster, long departed hence, for succour in the hour of need; but Christians and Catholics invoke continually Jesus Christ, His Mother, and His Saints. The belief that He, who was born of Mary and once lived an earthly life, lives still, not only in His Godhead, but also in His Manhood—and this, so that we may enter into real

habitual intercourse with Him and dependence upon Him—is the specific distinction and singular significance of Christianity amongst the religious systems that have been seen upon the earth. Alone amongst them all, Christianity dares to teach that the Creator of the universe "assumed humanity into God," "taking the form of a servant," with a servant as His Mother,—the Handmaid of the Lord,—in order that, through union with Him, all His servants should become also sons and daughters of the Most High.

Upon those who affect to term the Christian Faith a myth, it is incumbent to make an attempt, however inadequate, to furnish from the long list of delusions, which have imposed upon the credulity of their dupes, some false theophany that may match the religion of Christ in sublime beauty and unearthly power over all that is most divine in man.

Who else, save Christ our Lord, having long left this earth, still binds living men to himself by the bonds of love? Plato or Aristotle may still appeal to the human intellect with grave philosophies. Christ alone knows how, not only to enlighten the minds of His disciples, but also to sanctify their souls by His grace. Mohammed may still summon his soldiers to the noisy camp. Christ alone can so move our hearts and wills, that we may serve Him in quietness and in peace even to the end.

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For those who have at any time adored our Lord Jesus Christ and submitted to His claims, who have ever yielded Him their allegiance and surrendered their lives into His keeping, the sense of loyalty to Him, which is in itself the appeal at once of conscience and of experience, is little less than a categorical imperative—the imperious demand of an evident duty. Simon Peter's cry finds its echo in every Christian soul, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" If we leave Thee there is no one else beside Thee. In the desolate void outside of Thee, it is as the darkness that may be felt, as the darkness of the abyss.

And of the words of Christ.

The sermons, the speeches of all others, however persuasive and even compelling may be their rhetoric, rarely stir the hearts of men to practical endeavour for more than a few short years at most after they are uttered. If we read Demosthenes or Cicero, Burke, Gladstone or Bright, to-day, it is as to great masters of diction, for the wonder of their oratory in the past, that we turn to them—not to rouse ourselves to action in the present. But the words of Jesus Christ are as full of energizing, living power at this moment as when they fell from His lips in Galilee of old. They still move countless hearts to high resolve. They still effect their supernatural purpose in human lives. Will any freethinker teach us how this should be, unless,

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The witness of the Martyrs.

unlike all other spoken words, these words be in truth the very words of God?

Or, again, it is not possible to hold, as of small account, the testimony afforded to the truth of Christianity in every age by the white-robed army of Martyrs, weak women amongst them, and boys and girls, as well as men strong in mind and body.

In all the story of the race of men there is One who stands by Himself, a solitary figure, with none beside Him. Others had been before Him, others have come after Him, Saints, ascetics, poets, thinkers, writers, and men of action—law-givers, statesmen, commanders of many legions, mighty monarchs, claiming the obedience and devotion of countless thousands. But they have already gone, or soon will go, the way all flesh must travel. Silently they pass into the silent night. Excepting so far as in Him they live, their very names become merely a memory or a legend.

He alone lives, by His own power, in the hearts and lives of His people.

He alone, of those born of woman, has both sought and found credence for the assertion that He is the Eternal. Leaving out of account the delusions of the insane, such a statement as this has hardly been made, with any degree of seriousness, by any man save by this one Man. If made by another, none can conceive of faith being yielded to his word.

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Nor can we easily imagine that living men should be ready to die for the *love* of one, who has left this world in an age long past, excepting for our Lord alone.

Now, it cannot be denied that men of races the most diverse have in life, with absolute submission, acknowledged Jesus Christ to be their God, and that for love of Him they have died rejoicing—died often with words of triumph upon their lips, with joy and exultation in their hearts. For the love of Him they held out their hands to death with welcome, and most gladly shed their blood like water.

During the first few years after Mohammed's death, whilst his memory was yet green upon the earth, it is true that his disciples and friends laid down their lives for love of the Prophet of Islam. Mohammedans may, no doubt, even yet die for Mohammedanism,—in the sense that they die for its doctrines, or for the Korân, or for its promises. No longer are they willing to give their lives for love of Mohammed, the man. The Christian Martyrs, on the other hand, die, now, as they have died in every age since their God was crucified, not primarily for any system or for any book,—still less do they surrender earth and the goods of earth for hope of any private gain. Christ's Martyrs die for the love of Christ, their Lord.

Were He not God, were He the son of Joseph

the carpenter, it can hardly be maintained that the love of Christ, as of a living Person, could have survived more than a century at most after His death. But the love of Christ is as strong and fervent upon the earth to-day as in the days of His Apostles.

Hardly for a Catholic Saint would any man be content to give his life,—his all. Hardly for Francis or for Dominic, except so far as Francis or as Dominic represent the love of Christ for men.

Next to the Name of Jesus, the earthly name most full of heavenly music, most powerful in influence for purity and sweetness and for all goodness, is the name of Mary His Mother. But if men would die for Mary, it is only because of her most intimate relation to her Son. The love of Mary springs from the love of Jesus. She was the mistress of the House of Nazareth, where of old He dwelt. She is the depository of the inmost secrets of His Heart. The brothers and sisters of Jesus must ever love His Blessed Mother. But let Jesus be forgotten, and Mary's name will fade away from all remembrance. The glories of Mary are for the sake of her Lord.

Well-nigh two thousand years have passed since our Lady's Child first came into this poor world of men, and He still remains without a rival in His influence over mankind. None other has ever been hated as He is hated, for

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those who reject His claims know full well that they do so at their own great peril. None other has ever been loved and served as He is loved and served, for He alone demands the devotion —nay, more, the unconditional surrender of all those whose ears are attuned to hear His call for service and adoration. Were Christ not that which He claims to be, not only the love which He inspires, but even the hatred which is borne Him, would be a phenomenon for which no sufficient explanation could be offered, since there is nothing even distantly to resemble it in the history of the human race.

The saying of Pascal occurs to the mind: "He claimed love. To Him alone has love been given in every age. He is God."

The harmony of the Christian religion with the needs of mankind and with itself.

We may also confidently call attention to the manner (altogether above the power of Nature) in which our religion answers to the highest ideals and aspirations of humanity—of all sorts and conditions of men; or we may appeal to its harmony with itself in its various parts. It provides for every human need, yet it is one consistent whole; many-sided, yet simple and complete.

Such considerations as these afford testimony to the truth of Christianity which, to say the least, may not be lightly put on one side.

The evidence of the prophecies.

We have, further, the unshaken evidence of the Jewish prophecies of the birth, life, and

passion of the Messiah, and His own prediction concerning His resurrection from the dead, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the persecutions which should await His Church.

On what grounds did Christ Himself chiefly base His own appeal for faith in His word?

BUT what are the grounds on which Jesus Christ Himself couched His appeal, when in the strongest terms He demanded faith in Himself, in His doctrines, and in the Society which He left behind Him?

> "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; but he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me."[1]

Again and again in the Gospels our Lord is represented as making such a claim, as we find here, for Himself and for His Church—to be believed and received as having been sent by God the Father.

It was in the strength of his faith in Christ that St. John wrote to the first generation of believers:

> "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us."[2]

Such words as these have, with calm confidence in support from on high, been repeated by the Christian Church of each succeeding

[1] Luke x. 16. [2] 1 John iv. 6.

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century. The world may change its fashions as it pleases. The language of Christianity admits of no variation. Its demands may not be modified.

Christ appealed to the evidence of His "works."

Upon what foundation, then, let us ask once more, did our Lord Himself base this claim to be heard as from God—a claim which is thus unequivocally echoed both by His Apostles and by those who have come after them vested with their authority?

This is a question which can be answered in one way only. Christ pointed always to His works.

> "Believe Me *for the very works' sake.*"
>
> "The Jews therefore came round about Him and said unto Him, How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense?[1] If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.
>
> "Jesus answered them, I speak to you and you believe not. *The works* that I do in the name of My Father, *they give testimony of Me.*"[2]

Again,

> "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though

[1] Ἕως πότε τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἴρεις;

[2] John x. 24, 25.

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you will not believe Me, *believe the works*, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in the Father."[1]

And once more,

"Have I been so long time with thee and dost thou not know Me, Philip? . . . Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, or else believe Me *for the very works' sake*."[2]

His works miraculous.

Those works to which our Lord appealed were His works of mercy and of power. He gave hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind. He made the dumb to speak and the lame to walk. He fed thousands with a few barley loaves and small fishes. He raised to life those that were dead and restored them whole to their rejoicing friends. He did the works of God His Father, the Creator and the Life-giver.

And thus, in the natural order, our Lord from time to time showed His divine power by providing, even by *physical* miracles, for the life of the body and its various needs.

But there is another life which is not of this world. For this, too, Christ cared, and for this supremely, often referring to His kingdom, called by Him the kingdom of heaven, of

[1] John x. 37, 38. [2] John xiv. 9, 11, 12.

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The Mustard Tree.

which He was accustomed to speak under various figures.

This heavenly kingdom He once compared to a grain of mustard-seed, which should grow into a tree in the midst of an earthly garden. The mustard tree is His Church, which He planted in sequestered Palestine. This tree, sprung from so small a seed—its boughs now spreading, according to His prophetic word, over all the lands beneath the canopy of the sky—has become to-day a sign predestined, visible, majestic, of His mission from God the Father and of His own divine authority.

For we believe that it can be demonstrated that the hand, which sowed this tiny seed in the beginning, is the hand of the Lord our God,—the hand of the Almighty Creator of the heavens and of the earth and of all that they contain.

The life of the Church is a *moral* miracle, showing that the Father of men has provided not only for the material, but also for the spiritual needs of His human children.

> "Greatly are they mistaken who imagine that we believe in Christ without any proofs concerning Christ. For what proofs are clearer than those things, which we now see, that were predicted and have been accomplished? You, then, who fancy that there are no proofs calling upon you to believe things concerning Christ which you have not seen, look carefully at those things which you do see. The Church herself speaks to you with the voice of her motherly

> love: I, at whom you wonder now, bearing fruit and increasing throughout the whole world, such as you now behold me, at one time was not. But, 'In thy seed shall all the peoples of the world be blessed.' When God blessed Abraham, He promised me, for amongst all peoples, by the blessing of Christ, am I spread."[1]

Some fifteen hundred years have passed since the great Augustine wrote these words. We can repeat them with all confidence to-day.

To sum up: the evidence needed for divine Christian faith is evidence for the Divinity of Christ. The evidence available may be selected from many sources.

In this book we set out to examine some of those proofs for the truth of our religion, and, above all, for the Godhead of our Lord, that are afforded by the very existence of the Mustard Tree—the Holy Catholic Church—which claims to be the visible Society left on earth by Christ Himself—to witness to Him, to His Presence,

[1] "Multum autem falluntur qui putant nos sine ullis de Christo indiciis credere in Christum. Nam quæ sunt indicia clariora, quam ea quæ nunc videmus prædicta et impleta? Proinde qui putatis nulla esse indicia cur de Christo credere debeatis quæ non vidistis, attendite quæ videtis. Ipsa vos Ecclesia ore maternæ dilectionis alloquitur: Ego, quam miramini per universum mundum fructificantem atque crescentem, qualem me conspicitis, aliquando non fui. Sed, 'In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes' (Gen. xxii. 18). Quando Deus Abrahæ benedicebat, me promittebat: per omnes enim gentes in Christi benedictione diffundor" (S. August., *De Fide Rerum quæ non Videntur*, cap. iii., 5).

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His Mysteries, His Doctrine, His Oneness with the Father, until He, who once was crucified, come visibly again—until He come, as we believe, with power and majesty,
to judge the living and
the dead.

II

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH A PROOF OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

The argument from prophecy and miracles.

NO Catholic can safely deny that the argument for the truth of Christianity, which is drawn from miracles and prophecies, is in itself both sound and adequate. Moreover, in the demand which it makes upon those, who have time and opportunity to study it in detail, this argument is even peremptory. The prophecies of the Old Testament bear their unshaken testimony to the truth that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ. His own supernatural works—above all, His resurrection from the sealed and guarded tomb—attest the fact of His divine power, and prove that He is in very deed that which He claimed to be—the everlasting Son of God: "Before Abraham was, I am."

Prophecies and miracles are of a nature to carry conviction to the minds of all who are able and willing to examine them, since the former show the foreknowledge of God, and the latter set forth His omnipotence before the eyes of those by whom they are witnessed.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Council of the Vatican, Dogmatic Constitution on Faith.

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The cry of the centurion who "saw in what manner He had given up the ghost, 'Indeed this Man was the Son of God,'"[1] echoed the voices of many who, during the lifetime of Christ, had seen and marvelled at His wonderful works.

Obviously, however, this mode of demonstration, when applied scientifically to the Scripture narratives, is a way that must often be long and intricate, at times involving a chain of reasoning obscure and complex, and an examination of many books which are neither always plain in their meaning nor even (all of them) generally accessible. Moreover, it renders necessary much discussion on such difficult subjects as the nature and value of testimony, the authenticity of documents, and the like. For example, there is need of considerable mental equipment and apparatus critically to study such a question as the proofs of the resurrection of Christ. It is clearly out of the question for the man without leisure and learning to test exhaustively the evidence advanced on behalf of the Gospel miracles. At the present day, for this task the knowledge of an expert is required, if the result is to be intellectually convincing. It was not always so. In the beginning these marvels of the divine goodness had recently happened, and were therefore the more easily verified.

[1] Mark xv. 39.

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Thus St. Luke was able to appeal with confidence to the "many demonstrative signs"[1] of the appearance of the risen Lord to Mary Magdalene, or to Peter, or to the other Apostles, for he knew well that these eye-witnesses of the Resurrection were still living at the time when he wrote his book of the Acts of the Apostles, and that they could, should need arise, be interrogated and cross-examined by the sceptic.

Are there, then, no "works" effected by Jesus Christ visibly in existence at this moment, to which we, who live now, can make a summary appeal as standing evidence of His divine Personality?

The claim of the Catholic Church to be a miracle of Christ's Divine power.

THE Church of God declares *herself* to be the great external work of Jesus Christ upon the earth—His creation in the supernatural order, the home of His indwelling Spirit, through whom we "may have life and may have it more abundantly,"[2] whereby we "partake of His fulness, who is full, not only of grace, but also of truth."[3]

Now, if this claim be well founded, if Catholicism be in truth the work of Christ, we have, beyond a doubt, that which we need directly to our hand.

[1] ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις (Acts i. 3).

[2] John x. 10. [3] John i. 14, 16.

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Thomas Paine, the unbelieving author of *The Age of Reason*, asked the question, which, since his day, has often been repeated:

> "If God has given to man a revelation, why did He not write it on the face of the sun, so that all might see it?"

The Catholic Church bears to mankind the revelation given her by God. She shines forth, and her marks are written, not indeed on the face of the sun, but on the face of all the earth upon which the sun shines—written with such clearness that who runs may read her Divine message, if he will but pause to look, without possibility of error. The ancient promise has been accomplished. The path has been made plain for the wayfaring man to find it, so that even the unlearned need not stumble therein.[1]

In the words of St. Augustine, written in the fourth century:

> "There has been shown us the city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid, and the light set upon a candlestick, which shows its brightness to all who are in the house. *For where does the Church of Christ lie hid?*"[2]

The existence of the Catholic Church cannot be reasonably accounted for excepting

In the course of his argument against "the Jews and Gentiles, to demonstrate that Christ is God," St. John Chrysostom wrote as follows:

> "Inasmuch as the great mass of men, either through the slothfulness of their disposition, or

[1] *Cf.* Is. xxxv. 8.

[2] *Enarr: in Ps.* lvii. 9.

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on the hypothesis of the Divinity of Christ. This is the argument of St. John Chrysostom.

on account of their undue anxiety for worldly affairs, or by reason of their dense ignorance, will not willingly give ear to (*lit.* bear up under) a long discourse, I have judged it to be necessary to cut away the drudgery of listening to longwindedness and to remove men's sluggishness by a short argument. . . . Moreover, I will so speak as to be easily understood by slaves and by maidservants, by widow-women and by pedlars, by sailors and by farm-labourers. . . . If, then, an unbeliever should say to me, 'How can I know that Christ is God?' —since this is the first thing to be established, the rest all follows from it—I will not draw my proof from heaven or from other such things. For if I say to him that 'He made the heavens, He made the earth, He made the sea,' this he will not receive. If I say that 'He raised the dead, He healed the blind, He cast out devils,' this, too, he will not accept. If I say, He promised a kingdom and blessings unspeakable; if I talk to him of the Resurrection, not only will he not receive it, he will laugh at it. How, then, can we approach him, especially if he be an ordinary man? (ἐὰν ἰδιώτης ᾖ.) How but by those things which both of us admit without contradiction, of which there is no doubt? What, then, does he admit Christ to have done which he will not dispute? This,—that He founded the race of Christians.[1] . . . Twelve disciples followed Him. Of the Church no one had then conceived so much as the name, for the synagogue was still flourishing. At a time when nearly the whole world was under the dominion of impiety, what was His prophecy? 'Upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Weigh as you please this word (τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα), and you will see the splendour

[1] *Contra Judæos et Gentiles quod Christus sit Deus*, i.

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of its truth. For the wonder is, not merely that He has built His Church throughout all the world, but that He has made it impregnable, and this, though it has been assaulted by such conflicts. For by 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' are meant dangers which drag down to hell. Now, hast thou not seen the distinctness of this prediction? Hast thou not seen the strength of the result? Compare one with the other. Behold words which have their justification in facts, and an irresistible power producing its effects with ease. They are but few words: 'I will build My Church.' Do not on that account simply run them over, but *draw them out in your thoughts, with due attention*" (*μὴ παραδράμῃς ἁπλῶς ἀλλ' ἀνάπτυξον τῇ διανοίᾳ*).[1]

This was written three hundred and fifty years after Christ. For those living, as we do, fifteen hundred and sixty years later, the argument, already convincing in the days of Chrysostom, has been enormously strengthened by the flow of the long centuries.

The Church of God is still here. The gates of hell have not prevailed against her. This is an undeniable fact. We should not "run it over" without attention, but should rather "draw it out in our thoughts."

It is of interest to us, who dwell in what was then far-off Britain, to know that St. John Chrysostom, proceeding with the argument on behalf of the truth of Christianity to be derived

[1] *Contra Judæos et Gentiles quod Christus sit Deus*, xii.

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from the spread of the Church, continues as follows:

> "Even the British Isles, which lie beyond this sea, and are in the ocean itself, have felt the force of His word (upon this Rock I will build My Church), for even there, too, churches and altars (*θυσιαστήρια*) have been raised."[1]

And of St. Augustine.

If once more we turn to St. Augustine, we shall find that he is constantly urging this argument in Africa much at the time that Chrysostom was making use of it at Byzantium. For example, in one of his sermons on the Resurrection we find the following words:

> "Let no man palm off fables upon you, nor let heretical savagery bark from its little corner.[2] *Throughout all the earth the Church has been spread;* all nations belong to her. Let no man deceive you; she it is who is true, she it is who is Catholic. *Christ we have not seen, but her we do see; then let us have faith concerning Him.* Unlike us, the Apostles saw Him, but concerning her they had faith. One object they beheld, in the other they believed. And we on our part see one object; let us, too, believe

[1] *Contra Judæos et Gentiles quod Christus sit Deus*, xii.

[2] *De angulo.* St. Optatus (*De Schism. Donatist.* lib. II. i. 28) had employed the same word to press home the same truth. He upbraids the Donatists for thinking that the Church can be with them "in particulâ Africæ, in *angulo* parvæ regionis," forgetting that that body alone is the Catholic Church, "*quæ est in toto orbe terrarum diffusa*" (*which has been spread throughout all the earth*) (II. ii. 30). *Cf.* St. Bernard (*Serm.* 6 *de Ascens.*): "Falleris, Thoma Sancte, falleris, si videre Dominum speras, at Apostolorum collegio separatus. Non amat Veritas *angulos*."

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in the other, but contrariwise. For they beheld Christ, and believed in the Church, which they saw not. *And we behold the Church, so let us believe in Christ, whom we see not.*"[1]

Consequently, it was not without high patristic authority that the Fathers of the Vatican Council made their appeal to the evidential character of the Church's life.

And of the Council of the Vatican.

"Nay, more, the Church also, by reason of her wonderful growth, of her marvellous holiness and unexhausted fruitfulness in all good works,—by reason of her unity throughout the world and her unconquered stability, is in herself a great and ever-living motive of credibility, and an unimpeachable witness to her own commission from God."[2]

If the Catholic Church be in truth divine, she will bear manifestly the divine seal and

[1] "Nemo tibi fabulas vendat, non latret rabies hæreticorum de angulo. Toto terrarum orbe ecclesia diffusa est; omnes gentes habet ecclesia. Nemo vos fallat: ipsa est vera, ipsa est Catholica. *Christum non vidimus, hanc videmus, de Illo credamus.* Apostoli e contra Illum videbant, de istâ credebant. Unam rem illi videbant, aliam credebant. Et nos e contra unam rem videmus, aliam credamus. Videbant illi Christum, credebant Ecclesiam, quam non videbant; *videmus et nos Ecclesiam, credamus in Christum, quem non videmus*" (*Sermo* ccxxxvii., *In diebus Paschalibus*, ix., 3). *Cf.* pp. 40, 46, *supra*, and p. 97 *infra.*

[2] "Quin etiam ecclesia per se ipsa, ob suam nempe admirabilem propagationem, eximiam sanctitatem, et inexhaustam in omnibus bonis fecunditatem, ob Catholicam unitatem, invictamque stabilitatem, magnum quoddam et perpetuum est motivum credibilitatis et divinæ suæ legationis testimonium irrefragabile" (*Constitutio Dogmatica de Fide Catholicâ*, cap. iii.).

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impress, and we shall find in the various phenomena of her life proofs of the Godhead of her Founder, such as we shall all be able to examine for ourselves. Nor will it be needful to spend years of toil upon the process, since the main facts concerning Catholicism are matter of common knowledge undisputed by friend or foe. The Catholic Church is "written on the face of all the earth."

Beyond doubt it is of great importance that every educated man should keep a firm hold upon the more usual course of Christian apologetics in all its overwhelming strength. For thus he will be enabled to demonstrate the Divinity of our Lord, even independently of the existence of His Church; and this once done, he will hardly find insuperable difficulty in establishing the validity of the claim of the Catholic Church to be the creation of Christ, safeguarded by Him from error, and endowed with authority infallibly to teach in His Name.

The argument from effect to cause.

But I believe that it may be well sometimes to reverse the procedure, and argue now, not from cause to effect, from Christ to His Church, but from effect to cause, from His Church to Christ. And this on the admitted principle that not only every effect must have a cause, but also that every effect must have an adequate and a proportionate cause. "*Quisque effectus virtute continetur in caussâ.*"

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This method may be termed the *regressive* method. It makes its start from the process so far as it has been completed up to the time of inquiry, and proceeds backwards, step by step, in search of the factors and forces which have gone to produce the completion. If we follow this method with perseverance, it cannot terminate until the sufficient reason or ultimate cause be reached.

Where we see the work of a mole in a field, we argue the existence of a mole behind that work; where we see the work of a man, we know that a man's intelligence is in the background; where there is a house, of that house there has been a builder. So, too, where we see a work that requires divine power to explain its unique and permanent characteristics, there shall we recognize the hand of the Almighty. If the Catholic Church cannot be accounted for on the basis of a merely human origin, and if the Catholic Church be the work of Christ, then by this "work of His" we know that His claims are justified, and that in truth He is our God. Here is a house "whose builder and maker is God."

The watch involves the watchmaker. The organ suggests the organ-builder. No man can conceive of an organ without a builder or of a watch without a maker. Equally absurd would it be to postulate a series of secondary causes,

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each of which is in itself but an effect, independently of the pre-existent Cause, Himself uncaused, whom we call God. By the very laws of thought the contingent depends upon the absolute as necessarily as the idea of sonship is correlative to the idea of fatherhood. The existence of a son establishes the fact of a father. The existence of the finite world proves the existence of the Supreme Being, who is infinite. For the normal mind this must always remain the triumphant, as it is the familiar, argument of natural religion. It still remains true that "through the beauty of the creature the Creator may be seen, so as to be known thereby."[1] Still are "the heavens telling the glory of God, and the firmament" yet "declareth the work of His hands."[2]

The Catholic Church an effect, not self-caused.

So in like manner, when we come to think of the claims of that which professes to be a revelation from above, we inevitably admit that the Catholic Church of to-day, in the beginning of her history, had, like every other existing organization, some adequate and primary cause.

Christ is God, as He claimed, if He has produced an effect which God alone could produce.

If she answer to the promises and conceptions of her Founder so precisely as to stand before the world a superhuman work, beyond the power of man to accomplish, then that Founder is, as He declared Himself to be, the Lord our God. The Church is visible—the great work

[1] Wisdom xiii. 5 ; *cf.* Rom. i. 20. [2] Ps. xviii. 8.

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of the Incarnate Word, and the abiding monument of His Divinity.

This will accordingly be my thesis in this book. In attempting to establish it I shall take nothing for granted, but will only presuppose a knowledge of those facts which are recognized and freely cited as such by all men, of all creeds or of no creed, who are interested in these great subjects. I shall not assume either the validity of the claim made by the Catholic Church to be identical with the visible Society which Christ left on earth, or the truth of her doctrines; but observing the salient phenomena of Catholicism, their circumstances and effects, I shall, as I trust, be able to show that He who inaugurated the movement of which these are the results, can be no other than "the only-begotten Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father."[1]

The true cause of the Catholic Church to be sought in the New Testament writings.

BUT first let us glance for the moment at the state of the question.

On the one hand, at the present moment, we have the Catholic Church, a kingdom apart, yet the city on a hill;[2] unique, solitary, yet

[1] John i. 18.

[2] Two of the Jewish prophets declared that such there should be after the coming of the Messiah.

Isaias wrote: "And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it" (Is. ii. 2; *cf.* Mic. iv. 1).

everywhere to be seen, "spread"—even more conspicuously than in the days of the early Fathers—"throughout all the peoples under heaven,"—challenging inquiry into her credentials, asserting that she was built upon a rock by Christ, proclaiming that Christ is God. On the other hand, in the background of Christian history, we have the New Testament writings, giving their account of the origin of Christianity.

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Now with regard to the phenomenon of Catholicism, three hypotheses are possible:

(*a*) The Faith of Catholics that the Catholic Church was founded by Christ in the beginning, and remains the great living witness of the New Covenant in the world to-day; even as the maintenance of the Jewish race, distinct, separate—dispersed amongst the nations, yet never assimilated by the Gentile—is the standing evidence of the truth of the Old Dispensation.

Belief of Catholics that the Church is the work of Christ.

The Catholic Church claims to derive her origin from Jesus of Nazareth in the same strict sense that "the people called Methodists" owe their existence to John Wesley, or the Salvation Army is the creation of General Booth.

(*b*) The view of "Orthodox Protestantism," as it is sometimes called, in all its various forms and diverse manifestations—the belief that Christ is indeed the one true God and Saviour of men, coupled with the protest that Catholicism, far from being His work, is a mere

The Protestant view.

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corruption of His Gospel in many of its doctrines, or at least in some of them. For example: in its teaching as to the relation of the Bishop of Rome to the visible Church and to its Founder;—so that on this showing, the primitive revelation has been overlaid with error in the course of the passing years, but, mercifully, was rediscovered in the sixteenth century, and was revindicated by an appeal from living, public authority to the Holy Scriptures, as interpreted for himself by the private judgment of each individual.

That of the Rationalist.

(*c*) The discordant theories of Rationalists agree in excluding belief that Catholicism is directly and immediately the work of Christ. Indeed, according to Harnack (the most prominent exponent of such opinions), the Christian religion, *as we see it now*, has not Christ, but St. Paul, for its real founder, and has developed—mainly through the influence and genius of St. Augustine—on lines of doctrinal definitions, of ceremony, and mystery, and sacrament, such as Christ never contemplated, and would undoubtedly have repudiated, had they been foreseen by Him during His earthly life. In this spirit the Protestant Bishop of Carlisle, in a sermon preached at the Anglican Church Congress held at Swansea in the autumn of 1909, denounced the "scholastic meticulations" and "metaphysical subtleties" of the creeds, which, in his opinion, are divided from the

Scriptural confessions of faith by a distance "immeasurable not only in degree, but also in kind."

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The logical consequence of any such attitude as is here disclosed towards the dogmatic teaching of the Church of Christ is only too clear. If Christ has failed to perpetuate His Spirit in the institution which both actually bears His Name, and historically is the product of His Life, He may well have been a great ethical teacher —even the greatest of all—ahead of His age and of every age that the world has seen,—full, if you will, of a divine message, with which He was charged, but He cannot have been God. He has not done that which He set out to do.

From this negative conclusion Harnack and his school, we need hardly say, do not shrink. Unhappily there are minds to which an enterprise that is purely destructive in its tendency seems to present a wellnigh irresistible attraction.

And of the Agnostic.

In close relation with the mental attitude of the Rationalist philosopher may be placed that of the Agnostic, who asserts the impossibility of acquiring the knowledge of positive supernatural truth. Unless Christ be God, it is manifest that He, at any rate, can have borne no divine revelation to men. As we have seen, He asserted that He was One with the Father. If His assertion, His claim, be not true, we are now, so far as the attainment of supernatural knowledge is

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concerned, in the same position, as they were who lived before His coming. On this showing Christ is on a lower plane than Socrates,—amongst the most truthful and the least pretentious of men.

With the Rationalist view I am directly concerned; indeed, I shall bear it in mind throughout this book. My purpose will be to show that the account given of itself by Catholicism is the only tenable hypothesis; that the Catholic Church is a "work" of Christ; that it is *His* in the most exclusive sense—moreover, that no other explanation of the facts will bear the searchlight of careful, impartial scrutiny. If this be the case, it immediately becomes evident that our Lord, so far from having failed in His "work," has, on the contrary, by its accomplishment proved that His claim, to be in very deed the Eternal Son of God, should be accepted with most complete and most reasonable submission of the intellect.

Summary statement of these three views concerning Christ and Catholicism.

Such, then, are the three positions which, in view and in presence of Catholicism, may conceivably be taken up towards Jesus Christ:

(*a*) That of the Catholic:

> Christ *is* God, and the Catholic Church *is* His work. He promised to be with His Church to the consummation of the world; He declared that

He would send His Spirit to guide His Church into all truth; He pledged His word that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. Consequently, the growth and development of Catholicism are according to the divine plan and will.

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(*b*) That of the "Orthodox" Protestant:

Christ *is* God, but the Catholic Church is *not* His work. There is not and never has been any visible "mountain of the House of the Lord, prepared on the top of mountains, high above the hills." Alternatively, if that mountain ever existed, it has either been long since divided into three hills, all separate one from another (as the High Church Anglican will tell you), or (according to His Low Church brother) has become absolutely invisible to the eye of man.

(*c*) That of the Rationalist, and, in effect, of the "Liberal" Protestant:

Christ is *not* God, and the Catholic Church, as she is to-day, was neither intended nor foreseen by Him.

These views to be tested by Regression.

During the course of this inquiry we shall occasionally go back step by step in the history of Catholicism from the fifth century to the first beginnings of Christianity. It will not be

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necessary to consider the story during the period intervening between our own days and the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), inasmuch as from that date onwards there is but little, if any, doubt or controversy as to the facts. Indeed, generally speaking, it will suffice for the purpose at issue to bring the matter to the test by reference to the writings of the New Testament, especially to the Gospels — those (to Christians) sacred books, which are the sole record of the words and actions of Christ upon this earth.

Our argument thus becomes a form of the "argument from prophecy."

Sense in which appeal is made to New Testament.

And here, to avoid any possible ground for ambiguity or misunderstanding, let me say distinctly at the outset that I do not now set out (whatever incidentally may become clear on this head from the statement of the case) to prove specific Catholic doctrines by reference to the written Word of God. My purpose is rather to compare the "work" of Christianity, as Catholics know it at the present hour, with the plan disclosed in the beginning by Him whom the Catholic Church asserts to be the divine Author of her life. With this end in view we shall examine the phenomena of modern Catholicism in the light of those ancient documents which are known as the books of the New Testament.

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That they *are* ancient admits of no doubt. It is now conceded by practically all competent critics of every school that the three Gospels, called synoptical in consequence of the "common view" which they embody, were compiled during the course of the first century, and that the Fourth Gospel did not appear later than its close. Thus Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*,[1] which furnishes us with the latest results of the "Higher Criticism," gives the date of St. Matthew (Greek Version), first century; St. Mark after A.D. 70; St. Luke not later than A.D. 80; and St. John end of first century.

Date of the Gospels.

So also Dr. Barry:

> "We cannot question St. John's acquaintance with our synoptics, which throws all four Gospels back into the first century A.D. Conjectures bringing them down much later have no standing ground, so that Harnack terms the synoptics *Christian palæontology*. And, again, he gives 'the conclusions at which eminent writers, Catholics among them, have arrived,' as follows, that 'our synoptics *in their present form* were composed between A.D. 65 and 85,' etc. There is no doubt that six of the Pauline Epistles—the two to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, and that to the Galatians, and the letter to the Romans—were written during the Apostle's second and third journeys—*i.e.*, before A.D. 60."[2]

Or we may appeal to Mr. F. C. Conybeare. This witness, hostile if such is anywhere to be

[1] Vol. ii., pp. 247, 248.
[2] *The Tradition of Scripture*, p. 177.

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found, writes as follows in a work which he has issued for the Rationalist Press Association:

> "On the whole, the traditional dating seems to me the most satisfactory. Thus, I should set the composition of Mark's Gospel, as we have it, about A.D. 70; of Luke's at any time between 80 and 95; of Matthew's about 100; of John's about 110.[1] . . . Of the Epistles of Paul, very few are now disputed by competent critics. I am disposed to accept as authentic all of them, not excepting the ones addressed to Timothy and Titus. . . . The Epistle to the Hebrews has never been seriously attributed to Paul, but it is clearly anterior to A.D. 70, and Tertullian was probably right in attributing it to Barnabas. I have cited the Book of Revelation as a work of the last decade of the first century. This was the tradition of Irenæus, and the fact that a rescript of Domitian, of the year 93, is cited in it *verbatim* confirms that tradition. This, however, does not preclude us from seeing in it a working up of an earlier document of about the year 68 or 69, to which date Renan assigns it."

Especially of the Fourth.

With regard to the Fourth Gospel, there seems to be no longer any serious attempt (as distinct from violent assertions), on the part of modern Rationalists to discredit the statement of the Evangelist: "He that saw it, hath given testimony, and his testimony is true."[2] Even

[1] Indeed, inasmuch as St. Ignatius of Antioch, who died under Trajan, shows in his letters an intimate acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel, it is impossible that it should have been written later than A.D. 117.

[2] John xix. 35 and xxi. 25.

Harnack has been compelled frankly to write as follows:

> "Again and again have I attempted to solve the problem with various theories, but they led me into still greater difficulties, and even developed into contradictions."[1]

Yet time was, not so long ago, as I very well remember, when in certain "superior circles" a man was smiled at with a smile of mingled arrogance and contempt, as though he were either an ignoramus or a fool, if he ventured to express his belief that the last of the Gospels was written by St. John. This notwithstanding the fact that St. Irenæus, the disciple of St. Polycarp (himself the disciple of St. John), in his various works quotes at least a hundred verses from the Fourth Gospel, often with the remark, "as John the disciple of the Lord says," and tells us expressly that "John, the disciple of the Lord, who rested on His Breast, also wrote a Gospel when he was residing at Ephesus in Asia";[2] whilst, on the other hand, the Johannine authorship was hardly questioned until the end of the eighteenth century. If the prescription of close on eighteen hundred years is not sufficient to establish the authorship of a work, it is hard to see what test would be accepted by the sceptic as satisfactory and conclusive.

[1] *Gesch. der altchristl. Lit.*, I., part ii., p. 678. Leipzig, 1897.

[2] *Adv. Haer.*, iii. 1, n. 2.

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It is difficult to resist the suspicion that the real inwardness of the assault upon St. John's Gospel is to be found in the fact that it is so full of specific Catholic doctrine.

Date of the Epistles of St. Paul.

With regard to the Pauline Epistles, there is now a general agreement that they were written between A.D. 50 and 62. Throughout, they take for granted knowledge of the facts concerning the pre-existence, divine personality, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which we find in the Gospels. It is manifest that, apart from such knowledge, the doctrine with which St. Paul's letters are filled on every page would be absolutely unintelligible to his readers.

New Testament writings anterior to any developed Catholicism.

However, *so far as concerns our argument*, it is immaterial whether the New Testament writings date from the first century or from the middle of the second. In either case, Catholicism could only have entered on the most rudimentary stage of its development when they were given to the world, nor would it have been possible for any merely human foresight to have foreseen, or even conjectured, the course of its evolution.

Importance of the Gospels as testifying to the expressed purposes of Christ.

It must, therefore, be a matter of the very highest importance to examine what the earliest Christian writers—quite irrespectively of the question of their inspiration—have to tell us concerning those purposes of Christ, which were expressed by Him in days prior to any organized

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Christianity whatsoever. Their evidence will at least be independent of present controversies, for Peter, the fisherman, and Mark, his disciple, Paul, the tentmaker, and Luke, the physician, Matthew, coming from the receipt of custom, and John, fresh from the nets of Zebedee his father, knew as much, or as little, of railways and ocean steamers, of motors and aeroplanes, as of our modern religious conditions and external forms. Such men as they can never have so much as vaguely dreamed of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, or of the United Free Church Council, or of "the Elizabethan Settlement" and the Thirty-Nine Articles. They bear their convincing witness, without suspicion of bias or *parti pris*, to the expression (not seldom veiled for the moment in cryptic parable or suggestive sentence) of the mind of Him, to whom, if in truth He is God, the future, hidden to all others, was as an open scroll.

His prayer to His Father for a sign of His Divine mission.

From this point of view, it is very remarkable that the author of the Fourth Gospel assures his readers that, on the last night of His earthly life, our Lord begged His Father to give the world, in every future age, a sign over and above the sign of His "works" in general, to which He, demanding faith from men, had already made His appeal. Christ, to whose prayer, as Christians believe, nothing can be refused, prayed for a proof, that we, too, in the aftertime, might

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believe in His divine Mission and know that He came forth from God to man.

This proof for which He pleaded is that Unity which is to-day the characteristic distinction and first note of the Catholic Church. His words are unmistakable in their import:

> "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. I have manifested Thy Name unto the men Thou gavest Me out of the world . . . For them I pray. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name whom Thou hast given Me, *that they may be one, even as We are.* Neither do I pray for them only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word, *that they may be all one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us;* THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME; and the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them, *that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect into one,* THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT THOU HAST SENT ME."[1]

It is well to reflect upon the circumstances in which Christ is reported thus to have

[1] John xvii. 4-23.

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prayed. This prayer stands out unparalleled, both in the sublimity of its language and the solemnity of the moment when it was uttered. The last evening of our Lord's earthly life was swiftly passing. In a few short hours He would be given up to His enemies,—first, bowed in agony beneath the olive-trees of the garden, then, betrayed with a kiss—soon to be deserted by His Apostles as a body, and formally denied by their head. He was to be the rejected of men; the outcast of the people. Yet a little while, and a few poor women and one disciple alone would be found, faithful amongst the faithless, beneath His Cross. The sword, long since prophesied, was at length to pierce His Mother's soul. The Crucifixion of her Son as a criminal between two thieves, amidst the jeers of the soldiery and the crowd, was to take place before her very eyes. The divine failure was near at hand. That which His servants now acclaim as the triumph of the Cross was impending. But, in that hour, there seemed to reign the deathly darkness of the darkest night. And of all moments this is the moment which He chose for His prayer, so that power might come out of weakness and strength be made perfect in infirmity:

> "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, that they may be one, as We are, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

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If this prayer be heard, the sign for which Christ asked will have been given.

THERE was not a man in Palestine that night who, could he have heard these words of Christ, would have hesitated to say, even whilst he mocked: "Yes, if He can accomplish *this*. If He can bring about amongst His disciples and preserve during the centuries which are to come a unity that may be likened to the Unity of God, truly He is that which He claims to be—the Son of God."

And had some scoffing Jew beneath the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ bethought him of that which had passed only a few hours before, we can imagine his bitter taunt as he recalled the supplication:

> "Neither for them only do I pray, but also for those who through their word shall believe in Me."

"Shall any, then, be found to believe in the Master through the word of a disciple who has just denied Him at the jeer of a girl, and lagged behind, 'afar off,' in the day of trial?

"That Master Himself is failing—visibly failing—even as we look upon Him. He is dying—a shameful death. He is dead. His work on earth is already wrecked.

"Still, if in the distant future He should succeed—it is impossible, unthinkable, indeed—but if He should, if, after all, God should

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create the unity for which Christ has pleaded, then there would be no alternative but to accept the proof that has been given. No mere son of Adam could bring to pass such a work as this throughout the world. Any merely human power would be manifestly unequal to the task. It would be the finger of the Omnipotent, unmistakable and manifest. Once again we will say it, He cannot succeed. But *if* He should! . . ."

With some such words as these, men would have spoken then. But He *has* succeeded. Of this there is no room for doubt. Close on nineteen hundred years have run their course since that prayer rose to Heaven from the lips of Christ on earth. To His petition the Catholic Church is the visible response. So close and so intimate is her incomparable unity, that it reflects, as in a mirror, the Unity of God. She is the divine revelation on the face of "the sun-illumined earth" for all men to see. Her loyal children still remain, even as were the first Christians in the apostolic age, "of one heart and of one mind."[1]

To this prayer the Catholic Church is a visible response.

Such a unity as this is manifestly a divine "work," for it is according to the idea of Christ, and to His pleading with God, the Father, that last night of His earthly life, which now lies in

[1] ὁμοθύμαδον (Acts i. 14, ii. 46). Τοῦ δὲ πλήθους τῶν πιστευσάντων ἦν ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μία (Acts iv. 32).

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the far-back past of history. Our Lord came that He might "gather the scattered children of God into a oneness."[1] It is in accordance with this supernatural design, expressed in the Gospel of St. John long before it could have been actually effected, that we now see the purpose of Christ fulfilled in the singular marvel of Catholic unity, written large upon the face of all the world.

The difficulties which lay in the path of Christ.

AND what manner of man was He who, alone amongst men, has attempted so mighty a work—a work which He has not only attempted, but accomplished? How was He equipped for the task that was before Him?

The reputed son of a Galilean artisan, no resources of earth could be at His disposal, wherewith to realize His ends.

Racial antipathies.

It is well for us, who survey the vast field of Christian history from the vantage ground of our secured position, to bring home to our minds how insuperable must have appeared the obstacles which once lay full in the way of Christ. He was confronted with the exclusiveness of Jew, Greek, Roman. Behind that exclusiveness, the fires of age-long antagonisms and bitter memories were persistently smouldering, when not actually fanned into furious flame. To

[1] εἷς ἕν (John xi. 52).

inborn repugnances of spirit was joined widest diversity of outlook.

The Jew, with his deeply-rooted sense of religion, profoundly distrustful of the Greek trifler, as he deemed him, was wont generally to hold himself aloof from the uncircumcised Gentile. That Gentile lived outside the Covenant. His very food was common and unclean. What knew Socrates, what recked Cæsar, of Moses and all his cleansing rites? The one true God was the God of Israel. There,—so far at least as the children of Israel were concerned,—the matter might well be allowed to rest.

The Sadducee,—the Herodian, if so it pleased him, might dream his hellenizing dreams. Let there, however, be no mistake. Herodian and Sadducee alike were recreant to the theocratic past of their ancient race and to the traditions of their Fathers: "They were not of the seed of those men by whom salvation was brought to Israel."[1] Abraham, Isaac and Jacob cried shame on such from their hallowed tombs. It behoved "the sons of Sion" to let no man forget that they were lifted high above all the wanton "sons of Greece."[2]

Greek culture, on the other hand, regarded the barbarian with an arrogant contempt of intellect,—of all superiorities always the most insolent and the most supercilious. Especially

[1] 1 Macc. v. 62. [2] Zach. ix. 13.

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was the Greek temperamentally hostile to the Jew, and utterly scornful of all his most cherished ideals and pretensions, whether religious or ethical. Hellenism and Hebraism stand at opposite poles in their interpretation of life.

The free-born son of imperial Rome, in his turn, looked down upon the Greek with contemptuous toleration, and held the Jew captive to his eagles. The Provincial he despised as a being of an inferior type—a stranger to the wholesome Roman conviction as to the supremacy of law, and consequently for the most part an easy victim to the Roman instinct for rule and government. In one thing only Roman agreed with Jew. Men of both races regarded with the profoundest aversion the memory of any man who had died the death which they both looked upon as the most degrading that could be endured—the death by crucifixion.

Horace and Juvenal,[1] it is true, bear witness to a morbid craze for superstitions, supposed to be Jewish, prevalent in a certain kind of Roman society, but this was merely a ripple on the surface of the waters, and no more affected the main stream of life in Rome than the

[1] Hor., *I. Sat.*, 9, 69; Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 542 et seq.; xiv. 96-106; Persius, *Sat.* v. 184. *Cf.* Ovid, *Art. Am.* i. 416; Tac., *Hist.* v. 4, 5, etc.

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dabbling of a foolish coterie in the impostures of Madame Blavatsky has, in our time, touched the real life of England.

Indeed, it may be said without exaggeration that Theosophy, esoteric Buddhism, even Occultism, have come nearer to the average Londoner of the present day, than the genuine worship of the Mosaic Law fell under the observation of the average citizen of that Rome, to which Peter and Paul in due course journeyed. Any isolated attempts to syncretize the religious customs of Jew and Gentile only led to results which produced nausea in the patriotic, healthy-minded onlooker of either side.

and slavery.

Moreover, there was yet another obstacle in the path of Christ. The institution of slavery, more formidable far than any other hindrance to the religious unification of the human family, cast its evil shadow over the world. Ethnic antipathies might conceivably be softened, and their effect mitigated, but what human hand could hope to bridge the chasm that yawned between Philemon and Onesimus?

To the eyes of men the task that Christ has accomplished must have looked, during His life, hopelessly difficult of achievement. Much more was this the case when He came to die. At that supreme hour, had He not failed to come down from the cross when adjured to make answer to the taunt of His enemies? Himself

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The victory of Christ.

He had not delivered. How then should He deliver His brethren from the thrall of spiritual isolation and from the tyranny of custom?

Yet Paul, the Cilician Jew, once a Pharisee of the straitest sect of the Pharisees, but now the servant of that Jesus whom of old he persecuted, had the joy of sending, before he died, salutations written in the tongue of Hellas to Christians in Macedonia, from their fellow-Christians in Cæsar's household,[1] many of whom were slaves, whilst many of them were personages of the highest social importance. The Jew wrote lovingly to the Greek, linking to his own message of fraternity the greeting of Roman converts to the Faith. Roman, Greek, and Jew met at last—in their belief in the crucified Son of God. The three races were at length united—in one thing only, it must be freely granted, but that the one thing which is supreme—the unity of the Christian Creed. More admirable even than the spiritual fusion of diverse peoples was the abrogation by religion of class prejudices, which had to all who lived before the coming of Christ appeared fundamental and ineradicable. The Catholic Church from the beginning was not only an international society, but also no respecter of persons. Under the benign influence of Christianity, Paul shrank not from urging Philemon the slave-owner

[1] Philip. iv. 22.

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to receive Onesimus the slave "as a most dear brother both in the flesh and in the Lord."[1]

The supernatural brotherhood "in the Lord" was already teaching the disciples of Christ to recognize the natural brotherhood "in the flesh," which underlies all differences between man and man. And what kinship is there which may compare in closeness with that which unites men by grace to God, and to one another, through Christ our Lord?

They thus become the members of one Body. Moreover, the union which binds the servants of Christ in one is of its own nature essential and lasting, both in itself and in its effects; whereas every other association is necessarily accidental, and generally ephemeral. To belong to this or that family, to this or that race, to this or that side in politics, rather than to another, is a matter of comparative indifference. To belong to Christ is vital.

For the instructed Christian of every land there stands out one solitary Figure, who yet is not solitary. He is alone, but He will gather and incorporate all who will listen to His voice into His own Body. He will give each man, in the life of His Society, the full supernatural completion, which must be lacking to the individual so long as he remains in religious isola-

[1] Philem. 16.

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tion from the fellowship of the world-wide Church.

Union with Christ draws the many into one. National and personal idiosyncrasies become of small account when merged in the unity created by the Lord of all.

Nor after God had sent His Spirit to the Church did this remain for a single hour in the domain of theory. On the very day of Pentecost there were gathered together not only "Galileans," but "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Cretes and Arabians—devout men, [all either Jews of the Dispersion or Jewish proselytes, for Peter was yet to receive Cornelius into the Church, gathered] out of every nation under heaven."[1]

And soon did it come to pass that the Apostle of the Gentiles was able to demonstrate by his own practice, as a verified fact, the truth of the bold words which, in the greatest of all his letters, he wrote to the Church in Rome:

> "There is no distinction of Jew and Greek."[2]

To one who was not a Christian, this would have seemed the most reckless and impossible

[1] Acts ii. 5-11. [2] Rom. x. 12.

of self-contradictory propositions. Upon the Christian ear it fell already as the bare enunciation of a simple truth.

St. Paul developed the same thought more fully still when writing to the Greeks at Corinth:

> "For as the body is one, and has many members, but all the members of the one body, though they are many, are one body, even so is Christ; for we all in one Spirit have been baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or freemen."[1]

And in like manner to the Galatians:

> "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."[2]

And once again to the Colossians:

> "There is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all, and in all."[3]

In other words, our Lord came to annihilate in matters of religion, not merely racial, but even caste aloofness, at least in the things of the soul; not only distinctions of colour, but

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. [2] Gal. iii. 28. [3] Col. iii. 11.

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even those of sex. And in the majestic unity of Catholicism, this work has been accomplished from the apostolic age to our own, as in no other society, Christian or non-Christian, in any period of the world's history.

The white man will deem it highest honour to serve the mass of the black priest; the yellow man will receive Holy Communion at his hands. The cultivated European, and he who but yesterday was a savage in the wilds of Central Africa, may be seen kneeling at the same altar, sharing in the same divine sacrifice and partaking of the same divine Food.

A traveller from China or Japan, proclaiming himself a Catholic, visits an Englishman who also is in religious communion with Rome. From the first moment of their intercourse it is taken for granted that the faith of the Asiatic stranger is identical with that of the European, to whom he speaks. This man, of utterly different environment and antecedents, is united to the other by one thing external and verifiable. They "meet in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . henceforth no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."[1]

"One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," is

[1] Eph. iv. 13, 14.

the ideal, "as there is one God and Father of all."[1]

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More than this, it is an ideal which is perfectly realized in actual fulfilment. The oneness of the Catholic Church is like to that of a human "body, which, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity."[2]

In the Catholic unity truths in themselves difficult of belief are accepted by men of the highest ability and reasoning power.

Nor are they mysteries that are easy to be believed which thus compel the intellectual allegiance ("the obedience of faith"[3] St. Paul terms it) of the highly educated as well as of the illiterate. The noblest intellects, an Augustine of Hippo, a Thomas Aquinas, a John Henry Newman—separate in time and country, united in the unity of the Faith—rejoice with the simplicity of little children to bow down their minds before sublime truths transcending the highest powers of human reason.

The Catholic Church makes her appeal to every period of mental development and to all degrees of civilization. In her fold, by the poor especially, the good tidings have been welcomed, but none are shut out from her message, and men of all ranks in society have hearkened, in multitudes, to her voice. So has been fulfilled the charge entrusted to simple

[1] Eph. iv. 5. [2] Eph. iv. 16.
[3] Rom. xvi. 26, etc.

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uneducated men, by one who had no visible means of providing for its execution:

"Go ye and preach the Gospel to all nations under Heaven."

This commission was bestowed by Jesus of Nazareth upon His Apostles, after He had been crucified as a felon by those who, above all others, should have expected Him and rejoiced to welcome Him, when at length He, the desire of the Eternal Hills, visited His people. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."[1] He, who was once the outcast of Jerusalem, has been enthroned as King and Lord in the hearts of a vast host, which no man can number, in the Catholic Church. He is the invisible Head of the visible body, whose members through Him are united one with another by the triple bond of a common worship, government, and faith, even as He is one with the Father and with the Spirit in the Unity of the Godhead.

We may fairly ask whether the accomplishment of such communion, in submission of the intellect, be not a compelling testimony to the Divinity of the great Teacher who so unexpectedly claims to knit "the scattered children of God" into one, and prays that there may be seen on earth the sign of His own oneness with the heavenly Father.

What answer can be given to this argument

[1] John i. 11.

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by the Agnostic or the Rationalist? Can they parallel this phenomenon? Has any other man ever accomplished any other work resembling Christ's work in such a way that it may be fairly placed in the same category of achievements?

No parallel to unity of Catholicism in any non-Christian religion.

There are indeed various so-called world-religions, but not one of them, save Catholicism, has assayed the miracle of Christian Faith,—inducing men, many of whom were highly critical,[1] and even naturally sceptical in habits of thought, to submit their minds to mysterious, yet most precise and often highly elaborated, propositions, which are confessedly of such a nature as not to admit of any verification, beyond the word of Him, on whose authority they are promulgated for the world's acceptance, or rejection, at its own momentous choice.

Notably not in Mohammedanism.

With the exception, more apparent than real, of Buddhism in China, and of Mohammedanism, which has taken root in lands other than that of its birth, not one of these non-Christian

[1] In our day there has never been a keener judge of evidence than the late Lord Brampton (Sir Henry Hawkins). Of his conversion to Catholicism he wrote as follows: "The important step I took so late in life was the result of my deliberate conviction that the truth, which was all I sought, lay within the Catholic Church. I thought the matter out for myself, anxiously and seriously, uninfluenced by any human being, and I have unwavering satisfaction in the conclusion at which I arrived, and my conscience tells me it is right" (*Roads to Rome*, p. 11).

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ethnic religions can be shown to be more than racial in its development.

Buddhism flourishes in India and in China, but Chinese and Indian agree in being Asiatic. It has been acutely observed that, from one point of view, Buddhism may be regarded as a kind of Hindu Protestantism. Where Buddhism rules, it is by means of borrowed rituals—quite probably borrowed from Christianity; but its chief intrinsic strength—on the analogy of Protestantism—is Hinduism. The main force of Buddhism lies in the subtlety of the Hindu intellect. Hindus, materially subservient, triumph over Westerns in the realm of philosophic speculation. Outside the continent of Asia the religion that dates from Gautama always remains an exotic.

Mohammedanism, no doubt, has penetrated into Europe and Africa. In Africa, indeed, it is said to be making great advances, but never (as is very noteworthy) amongst men of European or of American birth. Mohammedanism, though it is found on several continents, is in no sense catholic or comprehensive, even in its aspirations, of all the children of men. Unlike Catholicism in this, it does not appeal to all races, however diverse, nor has it ever shown any tendency or desire to burst the bonds which circumscribe its influence over the peoples of the West. It should be remembered that (as

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becomes manifest from the attitude of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries in the armed struggle against the Moslems), Mohammedanism was nothing more than a bastard product of the Church. Its claims, though so inferior to those of Catholicism, were based upon the great spectacle of the Catholic Church. It teaches no original truth.

Again, Mohammed was only a camel-driver. From this fact, however, it in no way follows that the propagation of the religion which he founded was due to divine favour; on the contrary, that religion owes its victories, such as they have been, not to assistance from above, but to well-known material causes. It has been spread mainly by the sword. It calls neither to moral struggles nor to intellectual sacrifices. It makes no difficult demands upon the reason by exacting unqualified submission to supersensible mysteries of faith, and exercises but small restraint upon the irregular desires of the flesh, to which in many directions it sets no rein, and upon which it imposes little salutary check.

In these respects most especially is the religion of Mohammed dissimilar to faith in Christ. Christianity has prevailed, in spite of the peremptory precepts of obedience that it lays both upon the human intellect and the human passions, by strength of the mental and ethical

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self-abnegation, which it imposes. That he, who is willing for Christ's sake to lose his life, shall save it, is one of those divine paradoxes, the truth of which, in a Christian land, is constantly exhibited before our eyes.

The power of Mohammedanism seems to lie in the Arab *race*[1]—in the faculty which the Arab shares with the Jew of idealizing common things. The vitality of Mohammedanism lies in the vigorous life of Esau. But no man has ever pretended to read it written in the Korân, that Mohammed asked any sign of God, to prove that his mission came from Him, such as that for which Christ pleaded, and pleaded not in vain.

The only sign to which the followers of the Prophet can appeal is the rule of the Janissary and the Bashi Bazouk upon the earth, and the apotheosis of the harem, wherever the Moslem exercises his baneful sway.

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, points back from her present unity to her Founder's prayer. In every age she makes her confident appeal, not to the (it may be waxing) Crescent, but ever to the (it may be waning) Cross. She points, in explanation of her spiritual victories and of her supernatural life,

[1] *Cf.* Harnack: "Islamism arose in Arabia, and has remained, on the whole, an Arabian religion; the strength of its youth was also the strength of its manhood" (*The Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 74).

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to that sign of the Son of Man which speaks of a restraint impossible save by the aid of divine grace. She stands victorious in virtue of that hall-mark of suffering with which her children must needs be stamped and sealed. She wins her way through passing failure to triumph that passes not. She points, through death, to life eternal. Christianity, at its highest, clings to the Via Dolorosa, whilst Mohammedanism can but unsheath the sword, and in defeat is impotent.

Neither Buddhism, nor Mohammedanism, nor any other religion under the sun, can be shown to harmonize, as does Catholicism alone, with the recorded plan of its Founder—the fulfilment of which has never been explained on any hypothesis, save that of the Divinity of the great Teacher, who declared that He was one with God the Father.

Nor in any form of non-Catholic Christianity.

Nor can it be seriously urged that any form of non-Catholic Christianity — whatever its other merits—either corresponds with the unity of the Apostolic Church, or is consistent with the petition of Christ at the Last Supper for a sign of His Oneness with His Father—"that they may be one, *as* Thou in Me and I in Thee."

For example, would the ideal of a confederation of national Churches (dreamed of three centuries ago and still unfulfilled), each with its own distinctive confession of faith, in any way resemble the Unity of the Godhead, to which

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Christ compared the unity of His Church? Can it be argued that a system of religion, which is purely Slavonic and Greek in extension, or yet another which glories in being "Teutonic" (to the exclusion of Latin and Celt), or in being "Anglo-Catholic," or in bringing "men of different views to work together," bears witness to the power of God—or is any sign that God has sent the author of such a religion, clothed with Humanity, into the world, from the glory which He had with Himself before the world was? Have not merely human organizers often brought about unifying results in no way inferior to any of these?

Can any man maintain that the spectacle of the religious communities of Russia and the East, not only separated from Catholics, but even divided by deep-seated hatreds one from another —Bulgarian is more bitter against Greek, and Greek against Bulgarian, than is either against the Holy See—presents that image of Divine Oneness which Christ implored, in order that the world might believe that His Father had sent Him forth to dwell upon this earth?[1]

[1] In the classification of various hypotheses concerning Christ and Catholicism (pp. 55-60, *supra*) I deliberately omitted any reference to the position of the Church (at present out of communion with the Holy See) which styles itself "Orthodox." This great religious body, notwithstanding the fact that it has no pretension or desire to be Catholic (that is, co-extensive with the inhabited world), claims to be the One Church of Christ. Consequently, it is inconceivable that any normal Western mind should

Or can any man believe that such an image is afforded by the sight either of the Church of

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share its point of view. How can any man so far stultify himself as to profess that Society to be alone the true Church of God to which in the very nature of things he may never belong? St. Optatus and St. Augustine reproached the Donatists for confining the Church of Christ, which is (at least potentially) everywhere, to a corner of Africa. The same reproach holds good as against those Easterns who exclude all the West from the fold of Christ. Anglicans may eagerly covet recognition by, and even union with, the "Orthodox" Church, though they must know that this is a mere dream hopeless of realization. But an Englishman will hardly think seriously of attaching himself to a purely national Church, which requires, as a condition precedent to the reception of her Sacraments, that he should sacrifice his own nationality. Large numbers of Orientals are in full communion with the Holy See and the whole Catholic world, without bating a jot of their distinctive Eastern characteristics, nor, if they wished to do so, would they be allowed to become Latins. The Pole, on the other hand, must first be *russified* before he may be "Orthodox" in his spiritual outlook and allegiance. No doubt it is true that Anglicanism, as such, is circumscribed by the use of the English tongue, and practically limited to English-speaking peoples. But the Russian and the Greek are even more rigidly and exclusively national in their religion than is the member of the Church of England. The Anglican, at any rate, shares his religious isolation, not only with many of his fellow-subjects in the British Colonies, but also with the "Episcopalians" of Ireland and Scotland, and with those of the United States of America; moreover, if it so please him, he is free to idealize concerning branches of a tree visibly separate from one another, but imagined to be invisibly united. To Eastern "Orthodoxy," on the contrary, it is essential —so long as it persists in separation from the Chair of Peter—to assert that the whole West has fallen away from "the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship," and, conse-

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England, or of a divided Christendom? Disintegration, the strife of tongues, wranglings interminable—these things show little likeness to the Unity of the Godhead.

Nor is it possible to urge with any effect

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quently, from the Society instituted by Christ. The Catholic Church, alone uniting men of every clime in her œcumenical unity, has alone known how to combine a diversity of liturgical rites with an absolute identity of faith, ecclesiastical government, and Eucharistic worship. Catholicism stands apart amongst all religions, whether Christian or non-Christian, as being at the same time one and international. It is therefore the case that all useful purposes are attained (so far as we confine our inquiry to the phenomena presented by the Catholic Church of the present day, viewed in relation to her origins), if we consider those phenomena as they are regarded—(*a*) by Catholics themselves; (*b*) by non-Catholic Christians in general; (*c*) by Unitarians, Rationalists, and Agnostics. Nor is it necessary for us *in this connection* to differentiate between the different classes that go to the making-up of non-Catholic Christianity. Russians, Anglicans (High and Low), Baptists, Wesleyans, Presbyterians, and all the rest—vastly though they differ amongst themselves on other matters—may conveniently and with justice be grouped, so far as their attitude towards the Divinity of Christ and the claims of Catholicism is concerned, in the same category. Happily, they all (or nearly all) still profess belief—with varying degrees of emphasis and precision, it is true—in the Godhead of our Lord; unhappily, they all (here without any exception whatsoever) reject the divine authority of the Church, in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome. Accordingly, during the course of this book, after we have once stated the Catholic position on any subject, it will suffice to look at it from the non-Catholic (but Christian) and Rationalist standpoints respectively.

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that a *purely* spiritual, and therefore invisible, unity (could such conceivably exist) can be a proof *to the world* of Christ's divine mission, for—He Himself has said it—"the world cannot receive" that which "it seeth not."[1]

Christ no doubt prayed for an invisible as well as for a visible unity amongst His disciples. In both respects His prayer has been answered in the Catholic Church. Catholics attest the answer by their unity of obedience and by their moral and spiritual experiences, which "the world seeth not"; the world itself attests the answer by its attacks upon the Church and her government, which it does see.

The Catholic unity no merely human work.

TO Catholicism there is admittedly no parallel in the history of mankind. It stands alone, by itself, an absolutely isolated phenomenon. If it be granted, as granted it must be, that every effect calls for an adequate cause in explanation of its genesis, the conclusion appears inevitable. No adequate cause can be alleged for the unity of Catholicism, spread throughout the world, save the unique power of the word of Christ.

It follows irresistibly that Christ is that which He claimed to be—the ever-living God. "Before Abraham was made, I am."

The sign for which He asked has been given:

[1] John xiv. 17.

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"Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are. Neither for them only do I pray, but for those also that shall believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME."

"The world" does not consist of witnesses for the defence, but for the prosecution; when, therefore, hostile evidence tells in favour of the Catholic claim, the case is established beyond the possibility of contravention. Now, concerning the amazing unity of Catholicism, the testimony of "the world" becomes each day increasingly emphatic. Some anti-Catholic controversialists may indeed protest that this unity of the Church, imposing though it be, is not the work of God, but merely the result of consummate organization. If, however, no other organization has in any age achieved results similar to those effected by Catholicism, and if such results even lie outside the scope of human endeavour, who can reasonably doubt that this particular organization is superhuman and therefore divine? To acknowledge that such a work as we see in the Catholic Church has never elsewhere been accomplished, and is, in fact, above

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the power of man's accomplishment, is tantamount to recognizing the hand of God: "It is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes." Catholicism is the finished picture, of which the outlines were drawn by the creative finger of the world's Redeemer as He sat at table with the Twelve.

Few things can be easier than to form and to maintain an aggregation of units "agreeing still to differ." Few things present less difficulty than to induce men of the same tongue and of the same general habits of life to work together for altruistic and even for religious purposes, so long as their individual "private judgment" be unchecked, and their "freedom of thought" be practically unbridled. Only, in the aspect of such an agreement there is nothing which is markedly supernatural.

We are constantly assured by the prophets of vagueness and negation that men necessarily think differently in religious matters owing to the different constitutions of their minds, just as physically some are tall, some short, some have red hair, some black, and the like. It is loudly asserted that it is as impossible to bring men to agree on religious doctrines, as on questions of statecraft; that it is as hopeless to look for unity in faith, as in disputed points of science or economics, of medicine or law.

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If, then, men, who constitutionally stand wide apart from one another—men who, through the influences of heredity and environment, differ fundamentally on all other matters of dispute—are brought to agree on one transcendental subject, and, moreover, to admit all the practical consequences that follow, in the sphere of conduct, from such a theoretical agreement—in this we may reasonably find a convincing sign of the working of a power that is higher than human.

On the other hand, it will hardly be maintained that it requires the strength of God to bring men together, in a "comprehensive national Church," for the purposes of decent public worship.

Dryden's lines—in their blunt directness, not written with that suavity of address which at the present time we, for the most part, happily affect—will always be of interest to English readers:

> "One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound,
> Entire, one solid shining diamond,
> Not sparkles shattered into sects, like you!
> One is the Church, and must be to be true—
> One central principle of Unity,
> As undivided, so from errors free,
> As one in Faith, so one in Sanctity."[1]

It is clear that the phenomenon of Catholic unity presented itself to our fathers in the Faith

[1] *The Hind and the Panther*, part ii., 526-532.

with the same force as it does to us, whose lot is cast in times subsequent not only to the Protestantism of Luther, but also to the Rationalism of Voltaire.

In the days of Dryden, Protestantism (as that distinguished man of letters had, to his cost, every reason to know), was by no means a spent force. On the contrary, it was still full of energy and determination.

For the Catholic apologist, in the sixteenth century, Protestantism in general—during the reigns of the Stuarts, Anglicanism specifically—was for the most part the objective of attack.

To-day a far more dangerous foe looms in view.

Most impartial observers are of opinion that, long drawn out though the agony may be, the systems of religion inaugurated by Luther and Calvin now lie lingering on their deathbeds. But the anti-Christian principles of the Revolution—the direct product of the Reformation—are still energizing throughout Europe. Here in England their influence is to be felt not only where men congregate in their masses in great cities, but even in many a peaceful country-side.

The unity of Catholic Christianity should be for every Christian a convincing sign that the Catholic Church is the one Church of the Christian Scriptures and of the Christian Creeds. To emphasize this is not, however,

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Interdependence of the unity of Catholicism and the prayer of Christ.

our immediate object, but rather to take whatever share we may in a much more pressing and necessary work,—to demonstrate from the fact of Catholic unity the Divinity of the Church's Founder.

If the unity of Catholicism can be explained by natural causes, it must be admitted that Christ's petition for a sign from heaven has not been heard. Unless the Catholic Church be His work, there is no visible oneness amongst His disciples, to which believers in His Name may legitimately point as the proof of His divine mission. Unless the Catholic Faith be from God, the Father has not given "the world" that hall-mark of divine sanction for which Christ prayed with such solemn emphasis but a few hours before He died:

> "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, that they may be one in Us . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."

Thus does every form of Protestantism, in its own despite, rob the words of Christ of their native force, and empty them of their true significance. So is it that by the truth of the Catholic Faith (I write it with all reverence) His own divine mission stands or falls.

The reasoning of St. Optatus still holds good:[1]

[1] *De Schism. Donatist*, V., iii. 83.

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> "You [Donatists] give a second Baptism, then give also a second Faith ; if you give a second Faith, give also a second Christ ; and if you give a second Christ, then give a second God."

We are baptized into one Body. That Body has received one Faith from one Lord. The unity of Baptism is the seal and reminder of the unity of the Faith. The unity of the Faith is the pledge that there is but one Christ, and also the sign of His essential oneness with God the Father. If there be a second Faith, there must also be a second Lord, but if there be also a second Lord, what comes of the witness of the one Lord to the unity of the one God ?

Once let it be granted that the Catholic Church is in fact the work of Christ, then it is clear that He has succeeded most conspicuously. So has the prayer made "in the days of His Flesh" been "heard because of His reverence."[1]

The one Faith of the one Church bears witness to the one Lord, as the one Lord bears witness to the one God by whom that one Lord has been sent.

"Believe, at least," He asks, "for the works' sake;" and this is His great abiding work,—the amazing supernatural unity of the Church which He founded.

To this statement of the case one plea only is possible as a demurrer.

[1] εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας (Heb. v. 7).

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It may be urged as a counter-argument that the Catholic religion is manifestly so unlike the description of Christ's religion given us throughout the New Testament that it cannot be accepted as His work, and must therefore be ruled out of consideration—follow though it may that He has failed utterly, that "the sign" for which He pleaded with His Father has not been granted, and that men are left in the spiritual darkness in which the world was wrapped before His coming.

This objection we shall hope to examine in some detail in the following chapters of this book.

Difficulty of accounting for this unity save as a result of the Divinity of Christ.

Meanwhile, we may be permitted at once to call attention to a fact which hardly admits of question. The perplexity of a thoughtful and candid Agnostic, who sees the sign for which Christ prayed on the last night of His life actually given to the world, and yet refrains from accepting the legitimate conclusion to be drawn from this portent, must be of a far more disturbing character to an orderly mind than any difficulty which can well be imagined in the way of accepting the Catholic Faith.

And what is to be said of the logic or consistency of those who believe that Christ is God, yet, through the exigencies of their isolation, are driven to assert that the only answer to His dying prayer for the unity of His

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Church is to be found in "our unhappy divisions" and in a distracted Christendom?[1]

For all, on the other hand, who fail not to recognize His "work," which is the unity of His Church, it should be easy to believe "for the works' sake," since the work which He has accomplished in the Name and in the Power of His Father gives testimony of Him.

The argument of St. Augustine once more.

St. Augustine is fond of this argument, upon which he seems to linger with special satisfaction. In one pregnant sentence he formulates it thus:

> "The Apostles saw the Head, and believed concerning the Body; we see the Body, let us believe concerning the Head."[2]

The great African Doctor has drawn out this thought at considerable length in several of his works.

[1] The *Church Times*, in a leading article of February 5, 1909, writes as follows: "Schism exists in the Church, inveterate and obstinate." If Christ's prayer has been heard, schism there may be *from* the Church. But schism *in* the Church—the *one* Church of the Scripture and the Creeds—is a contradiction in terms. Such there cannot be, any more than it is possible for schism to be found in the Undivided Godhead. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, that they may be one, AS Thou in Me and I in Thee."

[2] "Apostoli Christum præsentem videbant; sed toto orbe terrarum diffusam Ecclesiam non videbant. . . . illi videbant caput, et credebant de corpore; nos videmus corpus, credamus de capite" (*Sermo* ccxlii., *In Diebus Paschalibus*, xiii. 12). *Cf. supra*, p. 50.

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For example, in a sermon preached on the words, "Jesus stood in the midst of them," he developed the familiar idea, in order to prove that the existence of the Church is a great aid to faith in the Resurrection of Christ.

> "[The disciples] saw the Head, and believed the Head concerning the Body. On account of the One whom they saw, they believed in the other which they did not see. Our lot resembles theirs. We see something which they did not see, and we do not see something which they did see. What is that which we do see, but which they did not see?—*The Church throughout all the world.* What is that which we do not see, but which they did see?—*Christ Incarnate.* As they saw Him—and believed concerning the Body; even so we see the Body—let us, then, believe concerning the Head. To us, in our turn, let that be of use which we see. The sight of Christ helped them, that they should believe that the Church was to be. The sight of the Church helps us, that we may believe that Christ has risen."[1]

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[1] "Quid de sponsâ . . . Caput videbant: et de corpore capiti credebant. Per hoc quod videbant, quod non videbant credebant. Similes illis sumus et nos: videmus aliquid quod ipsi non videbant; et non videmus aliquid quod ipsi videbant. Quid nos videmus quod ipsi non videbant? Ecclesiam per omnes gentes. Quid non videmus quod ipsi videbant? Christum in carne constitutum. Quomodo illi illum videbant et de corpore credebant: sic nos corpus videmus, de capite credamus. Invicem nos adjuvent visa nostra. Adjuvit eos visus Christus, ut futuram Ecclesiam crederent; adjuvat nos visa Ecclesia, ut Christum resurrexisse credamus" (*Sermo* cxvi. 6).

With this we may compare the parallel argument of

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And, again, he has summed up a detailed defence of the credibility of the Faith in the following terms:

> "'Look at me,' says the Church to you, 'look at me carefully, whom, however unwilling you may be to see me, you behold before you.' . . . You have not seen any of those things concerning Christ, which have been already accomplished and brought to pass [St. Augustine has just enumerated these—Christ's marvellous birth of a Virgin, His miracles, His passion, resurrection and ascension], but you do not deny that you now see the things which He promised actually present in His Church."[1]

The Catholic Church, in her fulfilment of the promises of Christ,—for the gates of hell have *not* prevailed against her,—remains the great witness to the truth of the Christian past. Her life to-day is the great security for the Christian future. Her chequered history, corresponding

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St. John Chrysostom: "Works which belong to God alone, such, I say, have I brought forward. But dost thou still say—that He has not raised the dead? Hast thou, then, this to say, too—that there are no churches throughout the world? Or canst thou say that these churches have not been attacked, or that they have not conquered and overcome? Nay, even as it is not possible to say that there is no sun, neither is it possible to deny that these things are so." (*Contra Judæos et Gentil.*, xvi., *ad finem.*)

[1] "Me attendite, vobis dicit Ecclesia; me attendite, quam videtis, etiamsi videre nolitis. . . . Illa de Christo jam facta atque transacta omnia non vidistis; sed ista præsentia in ejus Ecclesiâ videre vos non negatis" (*De Fide Rerum, quæ non videntur*, cap. iv. 7. *Cf.* also *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, cap. xxiv. 45, and *Sermo* cxxx. 3, 4).

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with the prophecies of her Founder,—her very existence, written on the face of all the earth, is the standing proof of His Divinity.

"Behold me, look at me carefully."

Such in our days, as in those of St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom,[1] is the advice and the appeal of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Let us then proceed carefully to look.

And since a visible body has a visible head, and a visible kingdom a visible ruler, we will, in the first place, look at him, who is the visible head of the mystical Body of our Lord and the visible ruler of His earthly Kingdom.

[1] *Cf. supra*, pp. 46-50.

III

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The Pope to-day.

LET us imagine ourselves in the great Church of St. Peter at Rome on some high feast day. The Pope is borne in upon his Sedia Gestatoria, the famous fans of ostrich feathers, peacock-tipped, wave beside him; the Noble Guard go before him, while the silver music of the trumpets from the dome, and the crying of ten thousand voices, proclaim the coming of the Vicar of Christ. As a spectacle of extraordinary and stately triumph, nothing to equal it is to be seen upon this earth. Carried out of ourselves, we look and listen, all our senses tense, and then, in one moment, it may be, the spell is broken. The present, with all its splendour, fades away. Unbidden, another scene from the far-off past flashes before the mind. It is now a rugged, homely, earnest fisherman that we are watching in his hour, not of exaltation, but of deep humiliation, to whom the Christ is saying: "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me."[1]

St. Peter in the beginning.

The contrast.

It is difficult to conceive of any two pictures

[1] See Appended Note A.

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more dissimilar than these—the lack of adornment, the lowliness, the abasement of the one, in the obscurity of an Eastern provincial town, in a day so distant and so unlike our own in its outward setting; the gorgeousness, the royal show, the uplifting of the other, beautiful beyond compare, in the Eternal City of the West, in the very heart of the vaunted civilization of the twentieth century.

The contrast between the outward grandeur of the Papacy and the humility of St. Peter's surroundings is so startling, that to some the two appear to be obviously irreconcilable. Surely, they urge, Pius the Tenth holds a very different position in the palace of the Vatican from that of Simon Peter in his fisherman's cottage. As to the outward dissimilarity there can be no question. But to those who will look a little below the surface, this will cause no wonderment, but rather appear inevitable.

The law of growth and evolution.

In all mighty works we mark without astonishment the fulfilment of the small beginning in the splendid accomplishment. What is the towering oak-tree but an acorn developed to maturity? Does not the brilliant Court of George the Fifth stand in legitimate succession to the rude Norman barons who surrounded the Conqueror on the field of Hastings? And so, to the Catholic, the magnificence which encircles the Papacy is but the fitting environ-

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ment, demanded and insisted on by the instincts of faith—that faith which will spare no offering, however lavish, so that it honour the person of the Vicar of the Word Incarnate. Pius the Tenth surrounded by Cardinals and empurpled prelates is no whit greater than Peter, or Linus, or Clement,[1] seated in the midst of those first Roman Christians, of whom St. Paul wrote that their faith was already "spoken of in the whole world."[2] The Popes emerging from the catacombs are of more account, in the estimation of Catholics, than are those who flourished in the days of the Medici. Pope St. Xystus the First is a greater figure in the Church's esteem than is Pope Leo the Tenth. St. Gregory the Seventh on his deathbed, in the land of his exile, has exercised a more lasting influence upon Christendom than was granted to any in the long line of Pontiffs, who never tasted the bitterness of the waters of adversity. Were the Pope to be banished from Rome to-morrow,

[1] *Cf.* St. Optatus, "Therefore in the one Chair (Cathedram unicam), which is the first of the endowments [*i.e.*, of the marks of the Church which had been enumerated by Parmenian, the Donatist adversary of the Saint], Peter sat first, to whom succeeded Linus, to Linus Clement . . . [a list of Popes follows], to Damasus succeeded Siricius [the Pope of the day], with whom the whole world is, in accordance with us, in the bond of communion, by the intercourse of letters of peace" (*De Schism. Donatist*, II. ii. 31 and 32).

[2] Rom. i. 8.

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and shorn of all outward pomp and circumstance, the unique position which the Holy Father holds throughout all the nations of the earth would still be assured in the hearts of the millions of the Faithful.

One thing is certain. They who wrote the Gospel story did not of set purpose so write it as to justify the Catholicism of to-day, of which indeed they cannot, at least in its outward appearance, have had any prevision. Nor has the Papacy, as we know it now, been cunningly elaborated and staged so as to make it look superficially like anything of which we read in the first Christian documents. This much, at least, is evident on the face of things.

Is the Papacy in legitimate succession to St. Peter?

Here, then, lies the problem:—how are we to account for the authority and influence of the Roman See at the present hour in Christendom and in human society? Is the existing power of the Pope a legitimate development of "a work" of Christ? Does it differ from what it was in the beginning, only in the same way that the man differs from the child? Is it in all truth the work of the Redeemer, even as not the infant alone, but also the full-grown man, is the work of the Creator? Or must we admit that its growth is parasitic or monstrous; that just as a human being, whilst advancing to maturity, may cover up and disfigure the image of God

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If so, this is a great work of Christ.

within him, even so ecclesiasticism and worldly ambition, usurped lordship and unfounded pretensions, have marred the work of Christ, and should accept the responsibility which is rightly theirs for the Papacy of the twentieth century?

If the first hypothesis be true—if the spiritual rule of Peter and of those who claim to be Peter's successors is "a work" accomplished by our Lord, then I hope to show that here we have something concrete and definite, to which we may make our appeal with confidence, as a great visible proof of His Divinity. On the other hand, it is manifest that, unless the Papacy be indeed the work of Christ, its world-wide sway bears witness to little, save to the tyranny of a long series of usurpers on the one side, and the credulity and weakness of their victims on the other. Should this be the true reading of the facts, it is undeniable that, *pro tanto*, the evidence is weakened for the Godhead of our Lord. It would not then be He who has achieved the wonder, but rather the enemy who has done it whilst He slept, or, at least, whilst He has seemed to sleep.

That this is so has been acutely felt in recent times by at least one distinguished Lutheran, to whom the problem presented itself in the form of a painful dilemma. It is just two years since Dr. Albert von Ruville, the celebrated

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German historian, became a Catholic. In his recently published book, speaking of the period before his submission to the Church, he writes as follows:

> "My Protestant prejudice made me argue once more: 'If only the Papacy had confined its teaching to the main truths, and had not inaugurated so many dogmas, so many institutions unacceptable to a scientific mind!' It was most painful to me to see that Jesus had not prevented or checked such errors, which, in my opinion, undeniably existed. Continuing this argument, I saw that I had to doubt either the institution of the Pontifical office *or the foresight of Jesus*. In the former case the whole Papal history, with its undoubted tradition from earliest times, would be rendered unintelligible, and in the latter case the sublime conception of Jesus, and with it *the whole foundation of my faith, would have been endangered*."[1]

The faith of Catholics.

IN the study of this phenomenon it may be advisable in the first place to state what Catholics believe at the present hour concerning the position of the Pope in the supernatural order and domain. We can then look back and see what the Gospels, taken as a whole, have to tell us of the relations existing between Christ and the disciple, whom He left as His chief representative upon this earth.

Catholics—it is common knowledge—believe that the Chair of Peter is the divinely appointed centre of unity in the Society which was founded

[1] *Back to Holy Church*, English translation, p. 21.

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by Christ; that its occupant is the successor of the Prince of the Apostles, to whom alone our Lord promised the keys of heaven; that he is the "ordinary" pastor of all Christian people; that it is a strict obligation of religion to be in communion with him; that he is infallible in his *ex cathedrâ* teaching as to the true meaning of the revelation made to man by God through His Divine Son. In the realm of man's own inalienable private moral sense and judgment, his own conscience is in the last resort the aboriginal Vicar of Christ. As to this there is no dispute. But Catholics believe that the Pope officially is Christ's Vicar, too,—the supreme earthly exponent of His mind and will. Consequently, to the final decision of the Apostolic See as to that of the Supreme Court of Appeal in the sphere of faith and morals, a rightly instructed conscience will gladly bow with complete submission. "Peter has spoken by Leo,"[1]

[1] This is the acclamation of the Fathers at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). In their letter to the Pope the Bishops of this great Council declared that "he had been appointed as the interpreter of St. Peter unto all." St. Leo had repeatedly claimed to teach with the voice of Peter. The Council not only admits this, but shouts it with acclamation. So, also, the Council of Cyprus, writing to Pope Theodore on May 29, A.D. 643, commenced their letter thus: "Christ our Lord has instituted thine Apostolic Chair, O Holy Head, as a God-fixed and immovable foundation. For thou, as truly spoke the Divine Word, art Peter, and upon this foundation the pillars of the Church have been fixed, and to thee He

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it was said of old, and this was decisive, for to Peter the charge had been given, "Feed My lambs; tend as a shepherd [that is, teach] My sheep."

It is a great, a tremendous claim; in its boldness, in its exclusiveness, comparable only to the claim of Christ Himself. If the Pope be not the Vicar of Christ, he must surely (as Cardinal Newman urges) be, to the Christian, nothing short of Antichrist. In this matter there can be no room for compromise, nor can any middle term here be found.

The witness of the Gospels.

How, then, stand the facts as to those "privileges" bestowed by Christ upon Simon Peter, the memory of which has been preserved in the New Testament records,—to which the successors of Peter unhesitatingly refer as the ultimate basis of their authority and position in the Church?

The correlation of Christ and Peter.

I. IT is narrated in St. Matthew's Gospel that at Cæsarea Philippi, near the shores of the Lake of Galilee, there once were standing a carpenter's Son, named Jesus, and, together with His other disciples, a fisherman's son, named Simon. Of them, when the time

committed the keys of the heavens," etc. (Mansi x. 613); and the Œcumenical Council of Constantinople (A.D. 681), in a letter to the Emperor, which was signed by all the Bishops, declared that "by Agatho [the Pope] Peter spoke" (Mansi xi. 665).

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was come, the Son of the carpenter asked the momentous question:

"Whom do *men* say that the Son of Man is?"

And they replied to Him:

"Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, and others that Thou art Elias, and yet others that Thou art Jeremias or one of the prophets."

"And whom do *you* say that I am?"

To this direct challenge the answer came from Simon, prompt and clear:

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Then Jesus said to His Apostle:

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven, and I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

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Upon these words St. Leo the Great makes the following comment:

> "The Lord asks all His Apostles what *men* think of Him, and they answer together, as long as there is question of the doubtfulness of human ignorance, but when the mind of the *disciples* is demanded, then he is first in confessing the Lord, who is first in dignity amongst the Apostles. . . . 'And *I also* say unto *thee*, as *My Father* has made known to thee My Godhead, so do *I* make known to *thee* thy prerogative, for *thou* art Peter.'"[1]

There are Three brought together in St. Matthew's narrative, the Father, the Son, and Simon Peter. The Father and the Son are represented as conferring high privileges—the One internal illumination, the Other external office. Simon Peter is represented as receiving both these gifts. To enable him to bear his witness, he is enlightened by the Father. After the witness has been duly borne, he is rewarded by the Son.

Tu es Christus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," cries Simon, son of John.

Tu es Petrus: "Thou art Peter," replies Jesus, Son of Mary, "and upon this rock I will build

[1] *Sermo* iv. 16, 17. St. Optatus, however, considers that St. Peter was not "first in confessing," but at this time was alone amongst them all in recognising that Jesus was the Son of God. "Ecce ceteris non agnoscentibus Filium Dei solus Petrus agnovit" (*De Schismate Donat.*, VII. iii. 102).

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My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In the Aramaic language actually spoken by Christ the words ran, "Thou art Kepha[1] (rock), and upon this kepha (rock) I will build My Church."[2]

Who can fail to see here that the *Tu es Petrus* is the correlative of the *Tu es Christus?* Is it not abundantly clear that they must stand or fall together? "*Thou art Peter*" is as truly the word of Christ as "*Thou art Christ*" is the word of Peter.[3]

[1] The terminal *s* was merely added to the Aramaic word *kepha* as a sign of the nominative, just as the same letter was added to the Aramaic *abba*, and has given us the form *abbas* in Greek and Latin.

[2] Matt. xvi. 17, etc. The difference between πέτρος and πέτρα, of which so much has been sometimes made, cannot be expressed in Hebrew, Syriac, or Aramaic. Thus both the Syrian versions, called the Peshitto and the earlier Curetonian Syriac, have *Ant hû Khepha*, *we 'al hedhe Khepha*. In the Greek translation, however, two slightly different words were used of necessity. It was impossible to have πέτρα (*feminine*) in both cases, because Peter was a man, and his name must have a masculine termination. And πέτρος (*masculine*) would not do in both places, because in the second clause the word *rock* (πέτρα) was required rather than *stone* (πέτρος). Kepha (the Aramaic word used by Christ) means either *rock* or *stone*.

[3] Non-Catholic controversialists naturally find themselves hard pressed by this passage, and are sometimes driven to strange expedients to explain away its significance. Thus the distinguished classical scholar, the Rev. E. D. Stone, has lately published a pamphlet in which he urges that our Lord gave the name Peter *playfully* to

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Long familiarity with these facts may perhaps have dulled our appreciation of their exceeding strangeness. Who was this Jesus of Nazareth? Whence came He, who to all appearance was but the Son of Joseph, the carpenter? "Is He not the Son of Joseph, and are not His Mother and His brethren living in our midst?" This was the kind of question that of late had been much in the mouths of men. He had been teaching in public concerning the "kingdom of heaven," and had gathered disciples round about His person. The most conspicuous of the band was one Simon Bar-Jona. And who was this Simon, son of John? He was the son of a fisherman, and a fisherman himself. In the Gospel record amongst the Apostles of Christ he is markedly called "the first."[1] To Simon Bar-Jona our Lord

Simon, as the other Apostles would at once see how little it suited his character. And Canon Hammond has urged that the passage is an interpolation. To this last contention it will suffice to reply in the words of Mgr. Barnes, "That it [Matt. xvi. 17-19] is an integral part of the Gospel there can be no sort of doubt. Every manuscript contains it, every version has it; even the earliest Fathers cite it as contained in the Gospel record. The external evidence is unbroken and unanimous, and the internal evidence is so no less. For this is no gloss which might, perhaps, have crept in from the margin, but is part of the narrative itself" (See *Contemporary Review*, March, 1910). *Cf.* also Michiel's *L'origine de l'Episcopat* (1900), pp. 20-48.

[1] St. Peter's name appears the first in each of the four lists of the Apostles to be found in the New Testa-

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had spoken unexpected words when first He saw him.

"Thou," He said, "shalt be called Peter."

Christ promises Simon a new name.

It should be observed that just as the Synoptics all give an account of the Institution of the Eucharist, whilst St. John, writing much later, was content to narrate the promise of the gift, so the other Evangelists mention the fact that the name of Peter was given by Christ to Simon, whereas St. John merely supplies the information that this new name had been promised and foretold on the occasion of our Lord's first meeting with His future Apostle:

"He [Andrew] findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is, being interpreted, the Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, 'Thou art Simon,

ment. Thus, in Matt. x. 2 we read: "*The first*, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother." The names of the other Apostles follow in pairs. There are twenty-five passages in the Gospels and the Acts where the name of Peter stands with other names, and in every single case the name of Peter is placed first. Ambrosiaster, a writer of the fourth century, draws attention to the fact that, as John the Baptist was before Christ in time, yet Christ was greater than the Baptist, so also "Andrew followed the Saviour before Peter, yet Andrew did not receive the Primacy, but Peter." ("Et tamen primatum non accepit Andreas, sed Petrus," *Comment.* in 2 Cor. xii. 11.) St. John Chrysostom says that ἱστορῆσαι Πέτρον in Gal. i. 18 is used of a visit of honour and reverence (see *Commentary on Galatians*, i. 11, vol. x., p. 631, and *In Illud in Faciem ei Restiti*, vol. iii., p. 378).

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the son of John. Thou shalt be called Kepha'[1] (which is, being interpreted, Peter)."[2]

We note once more the correlation of the two names Christ and Peter, and the importance already attached by the Evangelist to the mystical interpretation of each, which he contrasts and balances one with the other:

"The Messiah (which is, being interpreted, the Christ). Kepha (which is, being interpreted, Peter)."

[1] Σὺ κληθήσῃ Κηφᾶς (Vulgate, "Tu vocaberis Cephas"). We are reminded of such parallel passages as, for example, "He shall be *called* the Son of the Most High" (Luke i. 32); and, again, "The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be *called* the Son of God" (Luke i. 35); or, once more, "And thou, child, shalt be *called* a prophet of the Most High" (Luke i. 76). In these passages we find the same words —κληθήσεται (vocabitur), or κληθήσῃ (vocaberis). In all cases the word translated *called* means simply *known* or *recognized*, as the Son of the Most High in the case of Christ; as the prophet of the Most High in the case of the Baptist; and as Peter (the rock) in the case of the Apostle. It must be admitted that there is no trace in early tradition of the view, which seems to emerge from this passage in St. John's Gospel, that our Lord first promised the name of Peter, and subsequently conferred it at Cæsarea Philippi. Moreover, the Prince of the Apostles is called Peter from the earliest references to him in the Gospels. It is, therefore, possible that (contrary to what I have stated in the text) the name Peter was really given on the occasion mentioned by St. John. If this be so, the words mean, *From this moment, henceforward, thou shalt be known as Peter*, and an *explanation* of the title was given when Simon Peter publicly confessed the Christ.

[2] John i. 42. (*Cf.* Matt. x. 2, xvi. 18; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14.)

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If the Son of Mary be not the Saviour of mankind, how is it possible to account, in the light of the Christian faith of the future, for the fact that to Him the Name of Jesus was given by His Mother, even before His birth?

Name of Jesus and name of Peter both given before either could be verified.

And, if Simon Peter be not officially the Rock on which Christ built His Church, to what purpose, we may well ask, did Christ promise His disciple, even before the public confession of His Divinity, the mysterious name, which (unlike the appellation bestowed upon the sons of Zebedee) is peculiarly inapplicable to that disciple's personal character and history?

These are questions that demand an answer, not only from the non-Catholic Christian, but also from all those who call themselves "philosophic historians," and yet deny that Christ is God, notwithstanding the foresight of the future which was manifested by His declaration, that the gates of hell should not prevail against the Church to be built by Him upon the Rock of Peter.

Significance of names amongst the Jews

In the Hebrew Scriptures a name is never changed without real significance. We see this in the change of the name of Abram to Abraham,[1] of Sarai to Sarah,[2] of Jacob to Israel.[3]

[1] "Thou shalt be called Abraham, *because* I have made thee a father of many nations" (Gen. xvii. 5).

[2] Gen. xvii. 15.

[3] Gen. xxxii. 28.

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Moreover, a name which is solemnly given connotes an office belonging to its recipient, as when it was said, "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

And now the time had come for the fulfilment of our Lord's promise, and the public bestowal upon Simon of his new name, Kepha, or Peter.

"Thou art the Christ" (the anointed one), said the son of John to the reputed Son of Joseph.

"Thou art Kepha" (a rock), said Jesus in answer; and having uttered these words He proceeded immediately to speak of the Church that He would build upon "this rock."

"Upon this rock I will build My Church."

The Bishop of London differs from the Bishop of Oxford.

The present Anglican Bishop of Oxford admits that "it is difficult, I think, to feel any doubt that our Lord is promising the person of Peter to be the rock."[1] This difficulty, however, is apparently not felt by his brother-bishop, of London, who instructs us as follows: "'Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church,' meaning not St. Peter, but the body He had gathered round Him, who had confessed the faith, and on whom He could at last build His Church."[2]

[1] *Roman Catholic Claims*, p. 76.

[2] *Holy Week Addresses for* 1902, by the Bishop of London, p. 20.

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From whatever source of information Dr. Winnington Ingram derives this remarkable fragment of exegesis,[1] most certainly he does not find anything corresponding to it either in the Gospels or in the early Councils of the Church. We nowhere read in the New Testament that our Lord "could at last build His Church on the body which He had gathered round Him." On the contrary, we do read that He addressed *one* man, to whom alone He said: "Thou art Peter . . . *to thee* will I give . . .; whatsoever *thou* shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, whatsoever *thou* shall loose on earth," etc. Thus the learned and Protestant Dean Alford, in his well-known Commentary, writes: "The name Peter, or Kepha, signifying a rock, denotes the *personal* position of the Apostle in the Church of Christ."

St. Peter in true sense the Rock on which the Church is built, as Jesus in true sense the Christ.

So at the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) the Papal Legate, confirming the deposition of Nestorius in the name of the Pope, laid it down not that "the body which Christ had gathered round Him," but that Peter is "the pillar of the faith, the foundation of the Catholic Church."[2] Nor was the slightest surprise evinced at this declaration, which was listened to without question as the expression of a well-known fact, generally accepted at the time.

In almost identical terms, twenty years later,

[1] See Appended Note B.

[2] Labbe iii. 625.

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the Council of Chalcedon, in the solemn sentence of deposition against Dioscurus, drawn up by the Papal Legates, and signed by all the bishops, declared that "Peter is the rock and foundation of the Catholic Church and support of the orthodox faith."[1] Close on fifteen hundred years were to run their course before the Bishop of London's theory should come to birth. We call to mind the words of the famous German scholar, Kuinoel, in which he warns his fellow-Protestants that they would never have betaken themselves to such "contorted explanations of the words of Christ, had it not been for the requirements of the controversy with Roman theologians." But even these "requirements" do not justify Anglican controversialists in making the Word of God of no effect through human interpolations.

If Peter be not this Rock, the words of Christ have effected nothing.

If, notwithstanding the plain declaration of Christ, Simon Bar-Jona is not in any real sense "Peter" (*i.e.*, a rock)—if the keys of the kingdom of heaven were in no intelligible manner given to him, as they were not bestowed upon any other—if the promise of Christ has been left unfulfilled—if, as a matter of fact, the gates of hell have prevailed against "this Rock" and against the Church built thereupon, so that an usurped authority has sacrilegiously taken the place of that "rule" (whatever it may have

[1] Labbe iv. 425.

been) which Jesus of Nazareth left upon the earth, and has foisted superstitious corruptions and specious falsehoods into the place of His simple truth,—then, evidently, His words have not come true, and, so far at least, His purposes have failed of their accomplishment.

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But if, on the other hand, He has succeeded; if He foresaw and intended that which has come to pass; if He willed the development of the power of Peter's successors for the good government of His Church; if He has accomplished all; if He has actually built upon the weak fisherman and upon his God-given faith a Church, against which the gates of hell have *not* prevailed,—then to all this there is no parallel in the history of the world.

If Peter is the Rock, the words of Christ have accomplished what they said.

Had any man, disbelieving in our Lord, heard Him thus speak to Simon Bar-Jona, we can imagine the inevitable comment: "It is madness," he would have exclaimed, "it is presumption. It is blasphemy. He makes Himself like unto God. He allows Himself to be called the Son of God. He, a mere man, declares that He will give unto another man the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Upon him He bestows power to bind and to loose. He affirms that what this other thus binds and looses upon earth shall be bound and loosed in heaven. He proclaims that upon this fisherman and upon his faith He will build His Church, as upon

How these words would have struck a stranger who might have heard them for the first time.

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a rock, indestructible in face of the assaults of hell itself. Empty words indeed, fleeting and ineffective as the zephyr, let them float away into space, and quickly be forgotten amongst men. His pretensions are, on their very face, preposterous. Talk He may, but perform He cannot. Cometh He not out of Nazareth, whence no good thing shall come? Is He not the son of Joseph, the carpenter?"

But if the future had been unveiled before the eyes of that bystander; could he have seen what we see to-day and our fathers have seen before us—that the Son of Man has indeed "built" such a Church, still, after close upon two thousand years, possessed of the strength of vigorous youth,—then, surely, he would have marvelled at the strangeness of it all, and been forced to admit that the words of Simon Peter expressed the wondrous reality—that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God. For by the fulfilment of His word it would have become clear that He who seemed to be but an earthly workman's son was the originator of "a work" not human, but divine—a work, moreover, which it needed all the power of God to bring to pass. The permanence of a world-wide Church or Society, not fated, as are all societies of human origin, sooner or later to cease to be, but destined to last through the centuries, and to

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triumph over unheard-of difficulties and persecutions, has been effected entirely by resting on the foundation laid by the despised Nazarene —the carpenter—on the poor, simple, faltering fisherman, whose rock-like strength was to consist in this—that for him his Lord had prayed that his faith should never fail.[1]

Constant official identification by Christ of Peter with Himself.

II. THE correlation of the names of Christ and Peter is only one of the extraordinary and significant facts that bear upon the case. We observe in each of the Gospels a constant official identification by our Lord of Peter with Himself, together with a separation of Peter from the other Apostles, which is inexplicable excepting on the hypothesis that Christ foresaw the future, and intended thus to make clear His divine purpose, for all "who have eyes to see," in the gradual unfolding of His designs through the evolution of the Papacy.

What adequate explanation can be given, either by Rationalists who deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ, or by Protestants who reject St. Peter's everliving authority, of facts such as those to which I am about to call attention, when viewed in the light of that Catholic Christianity which was to come? Their very number and minuteness preclude the possibility of their being

[1] Luke xxii. 32.

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accidental coincidences. Interpreted in the light of the *Tu es Christus* and of the *Tu es Petrus*, they illuminate one another in unmistakable ways. To put it in a sentence:—if, as Catholics believe, our Lord by His words and actions showed His intention to associate Peter, and Peter's successors[1] even to the end of time, with Himself in the government of His Church, then He is God; for none save God could forecast that which was still hidden from merely human eyes. None but God could provide

[1] It was very early in ecclesiastical history that not only Peter himself, but also his See (the See of Rome), was spoken of as the Rock upon which Christ built His Church. The words of St. Augustine furnish us with a typical example. Writing against the Donatists, this great Doctor of the Church appeals to his adversaries to return to Catholic unity, and exclaims: "Come, oh my brothers, if you will be grafted upon the Vine. It grieves us to see you lying thus cut off. Number the Bishops from the very See of Peter, and in that order of Fathers observe who came after whom in the line of succession. *This See is the Rock which the proud gates of hell overcome not*" (*Psalm. Cont. partes Don.* Str. 18). As though he should remind his readers that Peter the Apostle was indeed to die, but the See Apostolic should never die. "*This See is the Rock.*" So also the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus wrote from the sixth General Council to Pope St. Agatho: "Glory be to God, who does wondrous things, who has preserved the Faith amongst you unharmed. For how should He not do so on *that Rock on which He founded His Church*, and prophesied that the gates of hell, all the ambushes of heretics, should not prevail against it. From it, as from the vault of heaven, has flashed forth [the word of the true Confession" (Mansi. xi] 716-18).

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for its accomplishment, by creative word and symbolic action. But if Christ is not God, and if the future did not lie open before His gaze, what rational explanation can be suggested of the undeniable fact, that in so many ways He chose out Peter, and Peter alone, to stand for the Church which He established? It is the special choice by Christ of Peter that alone has given him the position separate from the rest, which is recognized throughout the New Testament, and is full of significance in the light of ecclesiastical history.

Peter's boat.

Thus: (*a*) Christ taught from the boat, "which was Peter's,"[1] and which consequently has ever since been regarded as a type of His Church.

Special message and appearance to Peter after the Resurrection.

(*b*) After the Resurrection of Christ, we are

[1] Luke v. 3 (*cf.* St. Ambrose, *Exposit. in Luc.*, lib. iv. 68): "Ascendit in Petri navim. Hæc est illa navis, quæ adhuc, secundum Matthæum, fluctuat, secundum Lucam, repletur piscibus: ut et principia Ecclesiæ fluctuantis, et posteriora exuberantis agnoscas; pisces enim sunt, qui hanc enavigant vitam."

In a sermon to be found amongst those of St. Ambrose, which probably should be attributed to St. Maximus of Turin, entitled *De Cathedrâ S. Petri*, or *De S. Petro*, or (in Migne) *De Diversis XXXVII.*, we read these words: "Hanc igitur solam Ecclesiæ navem ascendit Dominus, in quâ Petrus Magister est constitutus, dicente Domino super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam." The Saint proceeds to lay it down that that boat was safe from the storm which was his (Peter's), in whom "is the strength of the Church (in quo Ecclesiæ firmamentum est)."

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told that it was said to St. Mary Magdalene, "Go and tell His disciples and Peter."[1]

And St. Paul writes to the Corinthians that our Lord was seen after the Resurrection "by Kepha, and then by the Twelve."[2]

Peter to catch men.

(*c*) Once more, we read in St. Luke's Gospel that after the extraordinary draught of fishes which was obtained not only for Peter, but also for "James and John, who were Simon's partners," it was to St. Peter alone that our Lord said, "Henceforth thou shalt catch men."[3] Christ, it is true, had already used words of similar import to St. Andrew, Peter's brother, as well as to St. Peter himself, when He called both to follow Him.[4] But St. Luke's Gospel remains to tell us how, under this figure, drawn from the daily avocation of the four leading Apostles, St. Peter represents the whole Apostolic Church.[5] Christ undoubtedly willed that all His Apostles should be fishers of men. The commission to Peter's "partners" is contained in that given to Peter alone. Peter, as always, stands for the rest. Here, as always, he is "the First"—the Head.

Peter and the Apostles.

(*d*) We may also mark the phrases, "Peter with the eleven,"[6] "Peter and the Apostles,"[7]

[1] Mark xvi. 7. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 5. *Cf.* Luke xxiv. 34.
[3] Luke v. 10. [4] Matthew iv. 19, Mark i. 17.
[5] *Cf.* p. 140, *infra.* [6] Acts ii. 14.
[7] Acts v. 29.

"the other Apostles, and the brother of the Lord and Kepha."[1]

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The tribute money.

(*e*) Again, we may consider briefly the incident recorded by St. Matthew with regard to the payment of the tax. We are told that the collectors came one day to Peter and asked him whether his Master did not pay the usual didrachma. St. Peter answered, "Yes"; but when he entered the house, no doubt eager to speak about what had just happened, Jesus anticipated his story, and, having laid down the general principle that it is not the children of kings, but strangers, who pay the tribute, or custom, worked immediately one of the most wonderful of all His miracles.

"In order that none might be scandalized" by non-payment, He commanded Peter to "go to the sea and cast in a hook," continuing thus:

> "Take the first fish that cometh up. And when thou shalt have opened its mouth, thou shalt find a stater [two didrachmas]; take this and give it to them *for Me and for thee*."[2]

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 5. "He puts the Coryphæus last" is the comment of St. Chrysostom (*in Cor.*, Hom. xxi.).

[2] Matt. xvii. 24, 26. St. Zeno in the fourth century gave a symbolical explanation of this narrative. The sea "without doubt" is the world. The casting of the hook by Peter into the sea—bringing about the death and appearance of the fish—represents the preaching throughout the world of the death and future coming of Christ.

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Surely we have here a remarkable identification by Christ of St. Peter with Himself, as the representative of all the children of the King.

The fish rising from the sea is Christ ascending from the dead [the world]. The two coins taken from the mouth of the fish are the two Testaments, coming forth from the mouth of Christ. They were to be preached for the salvation of Jew and Gentile. Thence should come the glory of the Lord and also the blessedness of Peter, *inasmuch as upon him Christ built the Church* (cum Domini gloriâ et Petri felicitate, utpote super quem ædificavit Ecclesiam). The opening of the mouth of the fish is a mystery (sacramentum). It belongs to the Church to explain, thus opening the mouth of the Lord (ἰχθυς), those things which He spoke in parables. The tribute was to be paid both for Christ and Peter. Peter was to preach the Cross of Christ, but also was to have the honour of his own cross (sed et tu crucis tuæ similiter dignitate gaudebis) (lib. ii., tract. xiii. ; *De Somnio Jacob*, ii. 188). *Cf.* Origen in Matt., tom. xviii. 4 ; also St. John Chrysostom, who writes as follows : "Since then, Christ was the Firstborn and Peter was known as (ἐδόκει εἶναι) the First of the Disciples, they approach him. . . . 'Give to them,' He says, 'for Me and for thee.' Hast thou seen the excess of honour (τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τῆς τιμῆς)? See also the wisdom of the mind of Peter. For Mark, who was his disciple, does not make this known, since it redounded much to Peter's glory ; but whilst he with the other Evangelists has narrated his denial, he has kept silence about those things which make him shine forth, perhaps because his master [Peter] forbade him to tell the great things concerning himself." St. John Chrysostom goes on to suggest that when shortly after the incident James and John asked our Lord, "Who is the greater?" they did so indefinitely, but really meant to ask, "Is Peter, then, the greater?" remembering the "Thou art Peter," and "I will give unto thee the keys" (*Hom.* 58, *al.* 59 *in Matthæum*).

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Messianic titles bestowed by Christ on Peter.

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III. IT is also a most noteworthy fact that those titles which, as the Scriptures assure us, belong in the strict sense to the Messiah only, were bestowed by Him in a secondary sense upon another, and that that other was Peter, to whose pastoral care He left His Church.

Of this there are several examples:

(*a*) Christ Himself, His Word, His credibility, is the one basis on which His Church, and, indeed, the whole fabric of Catholic Christianity, must ever rest. Yet it is undeniable that even here He associated St. Peter with Himself. *Petrus a Petrâ*,[1] wrote St. Augus-

[1] We find the statement: "Petrus a petrâ, non petra a Petro; quomodo" (or "quia") "non a Christiano Christus, sed a Christo Christianus vocatur," in four of St. Augustine's sermons (lxxvi. 1; ccxliv. 1—where, speaking of our Lord's resurrection, the great Doctor writes, "Surrexerat petra ut firmaret Petrum; nam perierat Petrus, nisi viveret petra"—cclxx. 2; ccxcv. 1). The same expression is used in *Sermo* xliv., of those to be found amongst the works of St. Ambrose, and at one time attributed to that Saint. "Recte igitur quia petra Christus, Simon nuncupatus est Petrus; *ut qui cum Domino fidei societatem habebat, cum Domino haberet et Nominis Dominici unitatem*, ut sicut a Christo Christianus dicitur, ita et a petrâ Christo Petrus apostolus vocaretur." Origen had gone further, and in his love of curious subtleties, had suggested that, as all the members of Christ bear the name of Christian, which is derived from Christ, thus sharing His name, so also every imitator of Christ should, like Simon Bar-Jona, bear the name of Peter, derived from the spiritual Rock, which is

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tine; and, although from the etymological point of view we may be unable to defend this derivation, theologically it must always remain true that Peter derives all his authority from Christ, who is the Rock."[1]

Thus St. Jerome writes:

> "To Simon, who believed in the Rock, which is Christ, He gave the name of Peter. But according to the metaphor of a rock, rightly is it said to him: 'I will build My Church upon thee."[2]

"Other foundation can no man lay excepting that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[3] Yet He, who alone is primarily the Rock from which His Church was to derive its stability, both promised and gave to Peter, and to Peter only, His own (in one sense incommunicable) Title."[4]

Christ. Παρώνυμοι γὰρ πέτρας πάντες οἱ μιμηταὶ Χριστοῦ . . . ἀλλὰ καὶ Χριστοῦ μέλη ὄντες, παρώνυμοι ἐχρημάτισαν Χριστιανοί· πέτρας δὲ Πέτροι (*in Matt.* 525, 526 κ.τ.λ.).

[1] 1 Cor. x. 4. *Cf.* S. Leo, "*Soliditas* illa, quam de petrâ Christo etiam ipse [Petrus] petra factus accepit, in suos quoque se transfudit hæredes" (*Sermo* v. 22).

[2] "Ædificabo Ecclesiam meam super te" (*In Evangel. Matt.* xvi. 18).

[3] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

[4] *Cf.* S. Leo, *Sermo* iv. 17: "'Quia tu es Petrus': id est, cum Ego sim inviolabilis petra, Ego 'lapis angularis, qui facio utraque unum,' Ego 'fundamentum præter quod nemo potest aliud ponere'; tamen tu quoque petra es, quia meâ virtute solidaris, ut quæ mihi *potestate* sunt propria, sint tibi mecum *participatione* communia."

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"Thou shalt be called Kepha, which, being interpreted, is Peter, or Rock."

"Thou art Kepha," or "Rock."

These are His own most solemn words (the first of promise, the second of fulfilment), from which those who believe in Him cannot wish to escape:

> "He digged and went deep, and laid the foundation upon a rock. And when a flood came, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and it could not shake it, for it was founded on a rock."[1]

[1] Luke vi. 48. It may be well to print here a famous passage from the *Retractations of St. Augustine*, lib. i., 21:

"Dixi in quodam loco de Apostolo Petro, quod in illo tamquam in petrâ fundata sit Ecclesia: qui sensus etiam cantatur ore multorum in versibus beatissimi Ambrosii, ubi de gallo gallinaceo ait: 'Hoc, ipsa petra Ecclesiæ, canente, culpam diluit'; sed scio me postea sæpissime sic exposuisse quod a Domino dictum est, 'Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam,' ut super hunc intelligeretur quem confessus est Petrus dicens, 'Tu es Christus, filius Dei vivi'; ac sic Petrus ab hac petrâ appellatus personam Ecclesiæ figuraret, quæ super hanc petram ædificatur, et accepit claves regni cælorum. Non enim dictum est illi, 'Tu es petra,' sed 'Tu es Petrus.' [Had St. Augustine been conversant with the Semitic idiom, and realized that our Lord gave His Apostle not, as he imagined from the Latin version, a different name from that of the Rock on which He was to build His Church, but identically the same (see p. 111, note 2, *supra*), this difficulty never could have occurred to him, and this retractation would never have been written.] Petra autem erat Christus, quem confessus Simon,

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Peter, ever living in his successors, was to be the outward and visible Rock; Christ was

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sicut eum tota Ecclesia confitetur, dictus est Petrus—*Harum autem sententiarum quæ sit probabilior eligat lector.*" The reader, who is thus left to choose between these two interpretations, as to which is the more probable, (1) that the Rock is Peter, (2) that the Rock (*Petra*) is Christ, from whom Peter derives his name (*Petrus*), is supposed to be, not a Donatist, or other heretic, but a Catholic—one, that is, who believes all that St. Augustine himself believed concerning the See of Peter. In countless passages in his works St. Augustine professes himself to be a Catholic, and constantly represents the Catholic Church as being in ecclesiastical dependence upon the Roman See. Thus, for example, he writes (*Epis.* liii., i. 3): "But even though some bad man (*traditor*, betrayer of his Lord) should have crept into that line of Bishops from Peter himself to Anastasius, who now sits on the same Chair where Peter sat (ab ipso Petro usque ad Anastasium, qui nunc eamdem Cathedram sedet), *this would in no way tell against the Church* (nihil præjudicaret Ecclesiæ), or against innocent Christians, to whom the Lord, in His thoughtful care, said concerning evil rulers, 'Those things which they say unto you, do ye, but do ye not the things which they do, for they say and do not perform.'" The thought is clear. The Bishops of Rome are set over the Church to rule it. Christians are to obey them, even though their private lives be evil. In his confutation of the Donatist, Petilian (contra Litt: Petil: ii. 41), St. Augustine used virtually the same argument, controverting the contention of his opponent, who maintained that the real or supposed unworthiness of one or other of St. Peter's successors justified him in abandoning the communion of the Catholic Church and of the Apostolic See. He sums up the matter thus: "If you would think of these words of Christ [above quoted], you would not, on account of the men whom you calumniate, blaspheme the Apostolic Chair, with which you are out of com-

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to be the inward and invisible support of that which is seen, giving security both to the building itself and to its visible foundation.

It has been objected that St. Paul writes that we "are built," not upon Peter, but "upon the

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munion." So, again, we find him writing in plain words of "the Roman Church" that in it "the princedom of the Apostolic Chair has always flourished" ("In quâ semper Apostolicæ Cathedræ viguit principatus") (*Epis.* xliii., iii. 7). The word *always* traces the tradition of this princedom to the very beginning of Christianity. There is no real sign in St. Augustine's eventful life of any wavering in his attitude towards Rome from the day of his conversion to his last hour.

Thus in the Life of the great Bishop of Hippo, written shortly after his death by his close friend Possidius, we read that "a letter of the Apostolic See had constrained (Sedis Apostolicæ litteræ compulerant) Augustine of venerable memory to go with others, his fellow-bishops, to Cæsarea in Mauretania, that he might settle certain troubles of the Church" (*Vita S. Augustini Episcopi, Auctore Possidio*, cap. xiv.); and St. Augustine himself writes (*Epis.* cxc.) that he went on this mission, *of ecclesiastical necessity*, through the command that was laid upon him by Pope Zosimus (me apud Cæsaream præsente, quo nos injuncta nobis a venerabili Papâ Zosimo Apostolicæ Sedis Episcopo ecclesiastica necessitas traxerat). This happened in the autumn of A.D. 418. Some five years later, and only seven years before his death, we find St. Augustine writing concerning disciplinary difficulties, in a letter (ccl.) of which only a fragment is extant, that he desired [in conformity with his practice (*cf.* p. 163, *infra*)] "to act in our [local] Council, and, if it should be necessary, to consult the Apostolic See" (in Concilio nostro agere cupio, et, si opus fuerit, ad Sedem Apostolicam scribere). Such is the language of Augustine. Such also is, in every age, the unmistakable language of Catholicism.

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foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner-stone."[1]

Again, we read in Holy Scripture that "the wall of the heavenly city has twelve foundations, and in them the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb."[2]

But it may be noted that we are told not only that "the first foundation of that city was jasper," but also that "the building of the wall thereof was jasper."[3]

In his learned book, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, Dr. Swete writes as follows: "That the first foundation stone is of the sort with which the whole wall is cased (ver. 18) shows how little our writer studies effect, even in his great picture of the New Jerusalem."[4] It may perhaps also serve to remind us that *the first* Apostolic foundation is none other than Peter, who is in the Gospel expressly called "the first" of the Apostles.[5] Therefore jasper, "*the first foundation*," here represents "the first Apostle." It is, then, striking to find that jasper also cases the whole wall of the heavenly city; and to some it may not seem far-fetched to think that St. John would by this image suggest to the mind of his reader the remembrance of him who was "first," not in the time

[1] Ephes. ii. 20. [2] Apoc. xxi. 14. [3] *Ibid.*, 18, 19.
[4] *Swete on the Apocalypse*, p. 291 *n.*
[5] *Cf.* pp. 112, 113 *n.*, *supra.*

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of his calling, but in dignity and pre-eminence, and who was also the rock upon which Christ built His Church.

Moreover, we must remember that a rock on which foundations are laid is one thing, but foundations laid upon a rock are another. St. Peter was both.

These are two separate metaphors, distinct one from the other, each of which has its own place and value.

As the first of the Twelve, St. Peter was the first of the foundations. But he was also named the "Rock" by Christ, and *as such*, upon him the foundations of the Church were placed. Firmilian, of Cæsarea, writing in the third century to St. Cyprian, to complain with much vehemence of Pope St. Stephen's disciplinary regulations, states this in so many words.[1] And, notwithstanding his anger and annoyance, he does not for a moment—at least, in theory—either contradict the contention of the Bishop of Rome that he was the successor of Peter, or traverse the statement that upon Peter the foundations of the Church had been placed by Christ.

Subsequently to the time of St. Stephen and Firmilian,—especially during the prevalence of

[1] *Epis.* lxxv. 17 : "Se successionem Petri [Stephanus] tenere contendit, super quem fundamenta Ecclesiæ collòcata sunt."

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the Arian heresy, when all the efforts of the orthodox were concentrated on defending the Divinity of Christ, some of the early Fathers, who understood Peter to be the rock on which the Church was built, occasionally wrote also of Peter's faith as being this same rock.[1] But it is clear that these two statements are inclusive, not exclusive, one of the other. The faith of Peter is *causaliter*, his person is *formaliter*, the foundation of the Church. In other words, Peter was appointed to be the rock *because of his faith*. "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven."[2]

The title of key-bearer.

(*b*) We read in the Old Testament of Shiloh, under the figure of Eliakim, that "the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; and He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open."[3] And in the New Testament we hear of our Lord that He it is who "hath the key of David, He that openeth, and none shall shut; He that shutteth, and no man openeth."[4] Yet, to Peter, and to

[1] *Cf.* Ballerini, *De vi et Ratione Primatus*, cap. xii.

[2] Dr. Plummer quotes his fellow-Protestant, Professor Biggs, as writing in the *North American Review* for February, 1907: "All attempts to explain the Rock in any other way than as referring to Peter have ignominiously failed." He adds himself that "neither the confession of Peter nor the faith of Peter is an adequate explanation" (*An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, by Rev. Alfred Plummer, D.D., p. 229).

[3] Isa. xxii. 22. [4] Apoc. iii. 7.

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Peter alone, He Himself has given the "keys of the kingdom of heaven."

As to the significance of this phrase amongst Orientals there can be no room for question. The giving of keys is in the East a well understood and constantly employed metaphor, nor is it uncommon in the West. He who holds the keys of a castle or city has supreme authority in that castle or city. Thus in recent times, on the occasion of the late Queen Victoria entering Dublin in state, the keys of that historic city were presented to her within its gates.[1]

So also in the South African War, when the brave defenders of Bloemfontein were driven, on further defence becoming hopeless, to the surrender of their town, they rendered up the keys to Lord Roberts. Or, to take another illustration. Yesterday (I happen to be writing at the moment in Edinburgh), according to an annual custom observed upon the meeting of the General Assembly of the Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Lord Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh delivered "the keys of His Majesty's good town of Edinburgh" to the Lord High Commissioner, "as representing our Most Gracious Majesty the King." The High Commissioner on his side first

[1] See the newspapers of March 31, 1900.

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accepted and then *restored the keys*.[1] No one will hesitate as to the meaning of such acts as these. How, then, is doubt possible as to the true inwardness of the bestowal of the keys of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, the Lord, on Peter, His Vicar?

Receiving the "keys of the kingdom" can only mean receiving stewardship, charge of the kingdom, even as the key of the palace of David was given of old to Sobna the Scribe. Now, this stewardship was, as the Gospel tells us, promised by Christ to Peter alone and individually (inasmuch as there can be only one steward), after his great confession of faith.

What explanation of this fact, other than that given by the Catholic Church, is even thinkable?

St. Luke tells his readers that our Lord had pronounced "a woe" upon the recognized interpreters of the law, "because they had taken away the key of knowledge. They would not enter in themselves, and those who were entering in they hindered."[2] The key which they had abused was henceforth to be taken away from them and bestowed upon Peter.

Conjoined with the promise of the keys is the declaration that laws to be made by Peter have

[1] Here we have an instance of the superior giving the keys to the lower authority. See the Scotch newspapers of May 23, 1911.

[2] Luke xi. 52.

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their sanction in heaven itself, for "to bind and to loose" is a Rabbinic formula, meaning to forbid and to permit.[1] We may notice that the interpretation of the law was also referred to as "binding and loosing" by the Rabbis.

Shortly after having conferred this power upon Peter, our Lord bestowed it upon the Church as a whole.[2] There is, however, no authority whatsoever, Scriptural or patristic,[3] adducible for the statement that the keys were possessed or can be possessed by any, independently of St. Peter, Christ's vicegerent or steward. He alone confessed the Christ, he alone heard the words, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona." To him alone the keys were promised.

Thus St. Optatus writes expressly:

> "For the sake of unity, Blessed Peter both deserved to be placed before all the Apostles, and alone received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with power to communicate them to the others" (literally, "meet to be communicated to the others").[4]

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[1] It is interesting to observe that even Dr. Gore admits this. "He [our Lord] goes on beyond all question to invest him [St. Peter] with an office, the office of steward in the Divine kingdom, with a supernatural *legislative* authority" (*Roman Catholic Claims*, p. 76).

[2] Matt. xviii. 8.

[3] *Cf.* p. 141, *infra.*

[4] *De Schismat. Donatist.*, VII., iii. 101: "Bono unitatis Beatus Petrus et præferri Apostolis omnibus meruit, et claves regni cœlorum communicandas cæteris solus

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And, again, when writing of the communion of Catholics with Rome, he asks the Donatists whether they deem it a mark of falsehood to have a share in the Chair of Peter and in the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, which had been given by Christ.[1]

The title of shepherd.

(*c*) Once more. Christ is the Good Shepherd, who, as the prophets foretold, should come to shepherd Israel. This is common ground for all Christians. But the last official act of Christ recorded in the New Testament was to leave Peter in His place, with His delegated authority, not merely as His steward, but also for the express purpose of being a shepherd to His people. "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep."

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accepit." *Cf.* St. Leo: "Transivit quidem etiam in alios apostolos jus potestatis istius. . . . Sed non frustra *uni* commendatur, quod omnibus intimetur. . . . *Manet ergo Petri privilegium*" (*Sermo* iv. 18). And St. Augustine, (to quote one out of many similar passages): "Dicit [Dominus] Petro, *in quo uno format Ecclesiam*" (*Sermo* cxxxvii., iii.).

[1] "Cathedram Petri et claves regni cœlorum a Christo concessas, ubi est nostra societas, numquid poteris approbare mendacium?" (*De Schismat. Donatist.*, VII., iii. 104). Harnack reminds us (*History of Dogma*, vol. v., p. 47) that "the connection with Peter's chair was of decisive importance, not only for Optatus, but also for his opponent, who had appealed to the fact that the Donatists had also possessed a bishop in Rome." St. Optatus, however (ii. 4), reproaches this Donatist bishop with the fact that he had nothing to do with "the Chair of Peter, our chief, who received the saving keys."

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We may recall the teaching of a Greek Father of the fourth century:

> "Our Saviour as a special trust commits to Peter the universal and œcumenical Church, after having thrice asked him, 'Lovest thou Me?' But when Peter to those questions readily gave as many confessions, he received the world in charge—a single shepherd, as it were, for a single fold. The Lord gave him *in His own stead* to His disciples to be their father and pastor and instructor."[1]

Whatever may be our feeling with regard to such a commentary as this upon our Lord's last words to His Apostle, there can remain no doubt as to the main phenomenon. Beyond question we have a wealth of cumulative proof, such as cannot be concentrated upon any other statement in the Gospels, tending to show that Christ identified Peter with Himself in the care of His Church, and left him upon this earth as the chief ruler and shepherd of His flock. St. Peter in his own person represents the whole Church.

Christ's association of Peter with Himself in the purposes of His coming.

IV. MOREOVER, we may look at these same facts from yet another point of view. Christ deliberately associated Peter, and Peter alone, with Himself in those high purposes, for the sake of which especially, He—

[1] S. Asterius, *Homil. in fest. Apost. Principum Petri et Pauli.*

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so the Gospel tells us—declared that He had been born into the world.

These may be reduced to three:

(*a*) *The forgiveness of sins.*

"Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."[1]

(*b*) *The teaching of Truth.*

"For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth."[2]

(*c*) *The bestowal of spiritual life.*

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."[3]

The forgiveness of sins.

(*a*) With regard to *the forgiveness of sins*, we may now consider from a fresh point of view the great fact that to Peter, and to Peter alone, was it said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." No doubt it seems to be the case that the words which immediately follow, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," imply legislative authority rather than the remission of sins.[4] Still, the Fathers, from St. Cyprian onwards, understand the grant of

[1] Matthew i. 21. [2] John xviii. 37.
[3] John x. 10. [4] *Cf.* pp. 136, 137, *supra.*

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the keys—whatever else it may involve—to carry with it also the authority to forgive the sins of Christians.

So St. Optatus writes, after speaking of St. Peter's denial of Christ:

> "Accordingly, we see that all was ordered in the Providence of the Saviour that he [Peter] should receive the keys. . . . It was provided that a sinner should open for the innocent, lest the innocent should close against sinners."[1]

The power of forgiving sins, and therefore, (as some of the Fathers say), the use of the keys, was bestowed by our Lord upon all His Apostles before His Ascension.[2] But this power had been already promised to Peter alone, and only afterwards was it conferred upon the others, and then upon them in union with Peter, from whom in the Gospel narrative they are never separated.

[1] *De Schismat. Donatist.*, VII., iii. 102.

[2] Thus St. Augustine especially insists in several places that the keys were bestowed upon St. Peter "*figuram Ecclesiæ*," or "*figuram universitatis et unitatis Ecclesiæ gerenti*," that is, "as representing the unity and universality of the Church," and that in his person they were bestowed not only upon the other Apostles, but also upon the Catholic Church in every age (*cf. Sermo* cxlix. 7 and ccxcv. 2). St. Leo the Great hands down the same doctrine: "Petro enim hoc singulariter creditur, quia cunctis Ecclesiæ rectoribus *Petri forma* præponitur" (*Sermo* iv. 18). Tertullian, on the contrary, after he had lapsed into the Montanist heresy, contended that the keys had been given to St. Peter personally, and alone, and not to his successors in the Apostolic See (*De Pudicitiâ*, xxi. 9).

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The teaching of Truth.

(*b*) With regard to *the teaching of truth*, it is significant that Dr. Plummer makes the following admission:

> "St. Peter is not only the rock to support the Church, and the steward to hold the Keys of the Kingdom, he is also the teacher who can give an authoritative decision. . . . The two words 'binding' and 'loosing' are technical expressions, the meaning of which was well understood. To bind is to forbid, to loose is to permit. Just as the Rabbi of great knowledge could decide what, according to the provisions of the oral law, was allowed or prohibited, so Peter would decide what, according to the teaching of Christ, was permitted or not."[1]

Further, it is recorded that Christ, in the course of the most solemn discourse at the last Supper, used these significant words: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have *you* [all you, My Disciples, ὑμᾶς], that he may sift you as wheat, but I have made supplication [ἐδεήθην, a very strong word, literally, "have begged as a favour"] for *thee* [Peter, περὶ σοῦ] that thy faith may not fail; and do thou, when thou art converted (or hast turned round after thy period of trial), confirm (or stablish) thy brethren."[2]

[1] Plummer, *St. Matthew*, p. 231.

[2] Luke xxii. 31, 33. καὶ σύ ποτε ἐπιστρέψας στήριξον. Plummer (*St. Luke*, p. 504), gives four possible renderings of ἐπιστρέψας.

1. *When thou art converted* (Vulgate, *conversus*). This he says is "too strong," and adds that the word "means turning again after a temporary aberration."

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St. Cyril of Alexandria makes the following comment on this passage:

"He *passes by* the other disciples and comes to the Coryphœus himself . . . 'and thou being

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2. "*When thou hast turned again.*" This he considers to be the exact equivalent of the Greek.

3. The transitive sense, *Convert thy brethren and strengthen them.* (*Cf.* Luke i. 16, 17; Jas. v. 19; but contrast Acts iii. 19; xxviii. 27; Matt. xiii. 15, and Mark iv. 12.) Plummer says that "it is not likely that the transitive sense is meant." Indeed not only is the intransitive use (especially in the moral sense, to return after sin as a penitent to God) the more frequent, but also the context suggests a recovery from a lapse, and ἐπιστρέψας is more naturally connected with ποτε than with στήριξον.

4. A Hebraism meaning *in turn* (this is the view of Grotius, Maldonatus and Bengel). Plummer calls it "a mistake," and writes that it is "a use, which perhaps does not occur in the New Testament." However, Father Gerald Stack, of Cambuslang, has written to me that, in his opinion, the Greek words, when retranslated into Aramaic, should be rendered thus, "Do thou in thy turn." He writes as follows: "The reason for this is, that 'tûv,' the imperative of the verb 'to turn,' is commonly used both in Hebrew and Aramaic in the sense of 'to return' or 'to repeat a course of action.' The 'aliquando' of the Vulgate, it seems to me, might be exactly represented in Aramaic by 'bazbenâkh,' or 'in thy time,' for the word zĕvan in Aramaic means both 'time' and 'turn'—*i.e.*, it includes both 'mal' and 'zeit' in German, or both 'tempore' and 'vice' in Latin." He adds in corroboration of this view that the Palestinian Syriac version actually reads: "And thou in time (or in turn) turn (or return) and confirm thy brethren." As this version is accused of following the Greek text too slavishly, its testimony will appear all the more significant. We may also note that in St. Luke's narrative our Lord's prophecy of St. Peter's denial (to which reference must be made if we

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converted, strengthen thy brethren'—that is to say, become a supporter and a teacher of those who come to Me by faith."[1]

And St. John Chrysostom:

"He passed over his fall, and appointed him first of the Apostles; wherefore He said: 'Simon, Simon,' etc."[2]

And St. Ambrose:

"Peter is *set over the Church* after he was tempted by Satan . . . for to him He said: But thou, when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren."[3]

Christ, then, without a doubt, placed Peter in the same position with regard to the other Apostles, in which He Himself stood to Peter. "*I* have prayed for *thee* . . . *do thou* confirm (or stablish) thy brethren."

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are to translate "thou, when thou hast been converted," or "hast turned again"), *follows* the words in question (*v.* Appended Note A). It is, therefore, somewhat difficult to apply them to a prophecy that has not yet been uttered. Obviously, if our Lord said simply, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and do thou, in thy turn, confirm thy brethren," this lays an additional emphasis on St. Peter's position in relation to the other Apostles. But, however we translate the passage, Peter is clearly marked off from "his brethren," whom he is "to confirm" or "stablish" (R.V.).

Στήριξον. It is interesting to note that St. Peter uses this word, not of his own work entrusted to him by Christ to stablish his brethren, when he writes (1 Pet. v. 10) that God will stablish (στηρίξαι) the Faithful, but of the work of the Lord Himself.

[1] *In Luc.* xxii. 31. [2] *In Ps.* cxxix. 2.

[3] *In Ps.* xliii. n. 40. "Petrus ecclesiæ præponitur," etc.

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It is of interest to compare and bring together in juxtaposition and combination this passage from St. Luke's Gospel with the words in which St. Matthew relates the prerogative bestowed upon Peter.

Luke XXII. 31, 32.	*Matthew* XVI. 18.
(1) "SATAN HATH DESIRED TO HAVE *YOU*" [THE CHURCH],	(2) [but] "THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT,"
(3) "BECAUSE (Ἐγὼ δέ)[1] I HAVE MADE SUPPLICATION FOR *THEE*" [PETER].	(4) "THOU ART PETER" (A ROCK, OR FOUNDATION—στήριγμα):
(5) "AND DO THOU STABLISH (στήριξον) THY BRETHREN."	(6) "UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH."

The purity of the faith of the teaching Church is seen to repose upon the efficacy of the prayer and promises of Christ, and upon the foundation which Christ laid.

The gift of spiritual life.

(*c*) *Spiritual life* is sustained by spiritual food, as natural life is supported by natural food. Now, it was to Peter that Christ spoke the solemn words before He left this earth,

[1] Ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδεήθην. Plummer points out that "the Ἐγὼ δέ and the aorist are in marked contrast to Satan and his request." "Satan has desired . . . *but* I have made supplication," etc.

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"Feed (*βόσκε*) My lambs"; "Tend—be as a shepherd to (*ποίμαινε*) My sheep"; "Feed (*βόσκε*) My sheep."

Others, indeed, were to share this divine commission, but this fact in no way derogates from the significance of the solemnity with which the feeding of the flock was in the first place entrusted to Peter, and to Peter alone. Others were to be Christian pastors, but in union with, and in dependence upon, him to whom primarily and personally the charge was given.

St. Augustine writes as follows in a sermon on the words of the Gospel, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?":

> "And when in reply he asserted his love, He commended to him the flock. . . . In this one Peter was figured the unity of all pastors—of all good pastors, that is—who know that they feed Christ's sheep for Christ, not for themselves."[1]

There is no glimpse in the Gospels, any more than in any of the Fathers, of isolated Apostles or of isolated Churches. It is uniformly "Peter and they that were with him."[2]

We have seen that the Gospels prove that Christ promised to one man (Peter by predestined name) the keys of knowledge and jurisdiction, the plenitude of power to absolve, to interpret, to teach, to rule: "I will give unto thee

[1] *Sermo* cxlvii.
[2] *Cf.* Mark i. 36; Luke ix. 32.

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the keys." We have observed that the delivery of the flock to Peter's pastoral care determined the subjects of that power: "Feed My lambs, Feed My sheep"; and that the prayer of the divine Head of the Church sustains the Faith of His earthly representative: "I have made supplication for thee."

In further illustration of the view of Antiquity on this subject, we may quote the witness of St. John Chrysostom from the East and that of St. Jerome from the West.

St. John Chrysostom writes:

> "He puts into his hands the presidency over the brethren . . . the presidency over His own sheep . . . and if anyone should say, How, then, did James receive the throne of Jerusalem? I would answer, that he appointed this man [Peter] teacher not of that throne, but of the world."[1]

By these words it is not denied either that St. James as an Apostle had universal jurisdiction, or that St. Peter fixed his local See first at Antioch, afterwards at Rome; but it *is* clearly asserted that a *special* world-wide authority was bestowed upon St. Peter, extending even over the Faithful at Jerusalem (the See of James), and this in virtue of the great commission bestowed explicitly upon Peter alone.

And St. Jerome:

[1] *In Joan., Hom.* lxxxviii. 1.

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> "One is chosen amongst the Twelve that, *by the institution of a Head*, any opportunity for schism might be taken away."[1]

It is clear that, if it was well to have a Head for the avoidance of schism during the lifetime of the Apostles, who had conversed with our Lord, it would become far more necessary after their death. It is, therefore, difficult to understand how any Christian can bring himself to believe that Christ carefully guarded the unity of His Church "by the institution of a Head" until the persecution of Nero should have removed St. Peter from the world, only to leave it defenceless against schism for all the long years that were to come.

The Papacy the fulfilment of the promise of Christ.

MY object in going over this ground, which has been covered by many other writers, has not been directly to prove, as they have done, the Primacy of Peter and his successors *jure divino*, but rather to drive home a simple question. Let me put it once again. Is it even arguable that all that we have been considering is only fortuitous coincidence? Can it conceivably be nothing higher than chance that there is still one, calling himself the heir of the Fisherman, in our midst to-day? Mere chance it must needs be, if the Catholic Church is but a man-made organization, and if Jesus of

[1] *Adv. Jovin.*, i. 26.

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Nazareth is not in very truth that which He was proclaimed by Peter—in this at least the mouthpiece of all Christian men—the Son of the Living God.

For all who are not Catholics, the Papacy, corresponding in its prerogatives with definite promises made of old in Galilee, must remain an enigma that is insoluble, or as some wonderful cabinet, that cannot be opened and satisfactorily investigated. On the other hand, for the Catholic, the key fits the lock precisely. Faith in the Divinity of Christ solves the problem, explains the permanence of Peter's sway, and causes us to bow our heads beneath the hand and power of God.

> "For the firmness of that faith, which was praised in the Prince of the Apostles, lasts for ever; and as Peter's faith in Christ endures, even so endures that which Christ founded in Peter."

Thus wrote St. Leo the Great,[1] but the converse proposition is equally true. The permanence of "that which Christ founded in Peter" is a visible fact, from which we may safely argue to a sure conclusion. *As Peter's See endures, even so endures Peter's faith in Christ.*

Not only is belief in the *Tu es Christus* our

[1] *Serm.* iii. 2. "Soliditas enim illius fidei, quæ in Apostolorum principe est laudata, perpetua est; et sicut permanet quod in Christo Petrus credidit, ita permanet quod in Petro Christus instituit."

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warrant for belief in the *Tu es Petrus*, but also the fulfilment before our eyes of the promise, *Tu es Petrus*, is an ever-present proof of the truth of the mighty words, *Tu es Christus*. The fisherman has been proved to be the Rock. Jesus is thus known to be 'the Christ, the Son of the Living God.'

Should a carpenter to-day set out to found a society, termed by him "my church"; were he solemnly to declare that he would build this church upon one of his disciples, an unlettered, impulsive man, whom he names a "rock"; were he to promise that against this church of his the gates of hell should not prevail; did he assert that he had prayed for this disciple that his faith might not fail, and that, as a fisherman plying his craft, he should henceforth catch not fishes, but men; and, again (now using another metaphor), that as a shepherd he should feed a flock committed to his care—at such pretensions we should not unreasonably gird—all such promises and all such prayers we well might laugh to scorn.

But if two thousand years after such words were spoken, they had been accomplished in ways the most unexpected; if men had, in fact, been caught like fishes into that fisherman's net—rich and poor, educated and uneducated; if they all believed with one accord that, in virtue of his Master's prayer, the fisherman, who had

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been also made a shepherd, could not lead his flock astray from the Faith preached in the beginning, but was infallible in his teaching (for a fallible teacher in the supernatural order is the most futile of mockeries); if that Church had, indeed, been proved to have been built upon a rock, and if the gates of hell had not in fact prevailed against it; moreover, if throughout these long centuries countless millions believed (and still believe) that the fisherman and the shepherd is himself the rock in very truth, then these things are without any parallel in all the histories of mankind.

Our Lord *has* effected that which He promised and foreshadowed, and *has* realized that which, humanly speaking, was incapable of realization. His work stands accomplished before our eyes —the visible work—of Peter ruling in his See and feeding in every age the lambs and the sheep entrusted to his pastoral vigilance. So "for the very works' sake" we believe, and with Simon, son of John, we, too, make our act of Faith.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

As thus we yield to Him the homage of our hearts and minds, He seems to speak to us in return, and bids us hearken to His words and give ear to His promise.

"Thou art a rock (kepha), and upon this rock

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(kepha) I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The following words of St. John Chrysostom have gained a thousandfold in force since first they were written:

> "And I will give to thee the keys. . . . For this *is proper to God alone*, to forgive sins, and *to make the Church immovable in so great an onset of waves, and to cause a Fisherman to be stronger than any rock* when the whole world was against him. . . . As the Father said, speaking to Jeremias, that He would set him as a column of brass and as a wall,—in the case of Jeremias to a single nation, but in the case of Peter to the whole world."[1]

If the stability of the Church of Christ was recognized already in the fifth century as a work "proper to God alone," how much more manifestly is it such to-day, when, after all the revolutions of the ages, the Fisherman is still seen to be stronger than any rock, though "the whole world may be against him"!

The attitude of the Agnostic.

HOW strangely unscientific is the attitude of the Agnostic or the Unitarian in face of such considerations as these! The Agnostic denies, or at least will not affirm, the Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. Consequently, he is forced to regard the relations of Christ with His disciple, Simon Peter, as the unexplained coincidences and freaks of destiny or chance, notwithstand-

[1] *Hom.* 34, *in Matt.* xvi. 13.

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ing their marvellous correspondence with the sequel in the Christian Church.

Christ's declaration is on record. It cannot be gainsaid. He asserted that He would build a church on a rock—on a fisherman and on his faith. It has been done as He said,—yet He is but as the rest of men. All is due to the chapter of accidents. Was ever a more lame and impotent conclusion drawn from admitted facts?

> "What," asks Professor Fairbairn, "is the principle fundamental to all science? This: we do not live in a world where things come uncaused. We conceive nature as the realm where order and causation reign. Chance is a word science does not know. Accident is a term which only denotes ignorance. It is used because vision has not found the secret it searched for. The growth of science is the decay of chance."[1]

And of the Protestant.

And what, we would ask once more, is to be thought of the intellectual position of those Christians who believe that Christ foresaw the use that would be made of His words and deeds, and yet maintain that by these words and actions He meant really nothing of any very particular consequence or importance to anybody? On a solemn occasion He bestowed on Simon Bar-Jona the name of Kepha, fulfilling thereby His own prediction,—yet Simon Peter is not Kepha, a rock, in any sense other than that in which all

[1] *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 566, 567.

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the Apostles were the foundation-stones of the building.[1] To him He would give the keys of His own kingdom. By this, again, no special gift is denoted, the meaning of which can be understood by human beings of average intelligence. That Peter should hereafter open the gates of the Church to both Jew and Gentile is beyond doubt an event not without significance, but hardly by itself an adequate fulfilment of divine words. For Peter alone Christ paid tribute. From Peter's boat Christ taught His disciples. All is devoid of lessons for mankind—all purposeless, rhetorical action. And so on indefinitely, with incident upon incident, the record of which has been carefully,—but, it would seem, to no good purpose—preserved in the Gospel narrative.

Surely, if the authority claimed by the successors of Peter be not according to the mind of Christ, He who foresaw the sense that would be attached to these clear sayings of His by generation after generation of His disciples, never would have allowed them to fall from His divine lips. Thus to have spoken, on this hypothesis, would have been nothing short of a reckless, unmeasured use of speech, altogether unworthy of One, concerning whom we believe that He spoke as man never spoke before and as man shall never speak again.

[1] *Vide* pp. 131-133, *supra.*

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If Catholics,—by that which they know to be an impossible supposition,—are in error in their Faith concerning "the privilege of Peter," then they have been misled in consequence of their belief in the very words of Christ—words uttered by Him deliberately and with full knowledge of the interpretation to be placed upon them by His Church through long centuries of her life.

This is nothing less than to reduce Christ's teaching to the level of complete uncertainty. This is to evacuate His words of their obvious meaning, and thus actually to deceive those who trust Him to the full. "O Lord, if deceit there be, by Thee have we been deceived"[1]—for all those who believe in His Godhead, an intolerable and even blasphemous conclusion.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."[2] The words of Christ were not spoken, nor are they heard, in vain. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away. He cannot be Himself deceived, *nor can He deceive* those who listen to His voice with simple faith.

[1] *Cf.* Richard of St. Victor (*De Trin.*, i. 2), where, speaking of the evidential force of miracles, he says: "Domine, *si error est, a Te decepti sumus.* Nam ista [fidei dogmata] in nobis tantis signis et prodigiis confirmata sunt et talibus, quæ non nisi per Te fieri potuerunt."

[2] Rom. x. 17.

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Dr. Gore admits that "the Roman Church was endowed with a splendid capacity for 'holding the tradition' with unswerving orthodoxy."[1] The same capacity is hers to-day, and will be hers to the end of time, for she possesses the promises of Christ, made by our Lord to His chief Apostle. Peter speaks ever by the mouth of his successor, be he named Pius, or Gregory, or Leo, or Innocent, or Clement.

Upon all who acknowledge the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth, but are not in communion with the *Cathedra Petri*, lies the obligation of explaining not merely this saying or that, but the whole trend of the Scripture narrative concerning the dealings of Christ with Peter. This is a task that has been hardly attempted by any anti-Roman controversialist. The cumulative argument from the Gospels on behalf of the Petrine Primacy, *jure divino*, is, for the most part, studiously ignored.

How different for those whose tents are pitched within the unity of the Church—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic—whose circumference is the world and whose centre is that First See, which has ever been acclaimed as Blessed Peter's. With what gladness, with what spiritual elation beat the hearts of Catholics as, during some solemn function, they enter the wondrous fane, soon to kneel in prayer at the Confession of the

[1] *Roman Catholic Claims*, p. 107.

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Holy Apostles, in that Eternal City where the body of Peter and the body of Paul await the Resurrection of the Just. "Hence Paul shall arise from the tomb, and with Peter be caught up to meet the Lord."[1] Living in the present, but his mind illumined not only by the light of faith, but also through the long story of the historic past, a Catholic will gaze with awestruck eyes upon the mighty dome, girt round about by creative words, once spoken by his God upon the shores of the Galilean lake, now blazoned forth in letters of gold for every eye here to see, to read, to mark, to understand.

Tu es Petrus, et super hanc Petram ædificabo Ecclesiam Meam.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church."

And the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

LET us again "look carefully," that so we may, with clearer understanding, ponder in our hearts those strange words of Christ to Peter: "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou art a scandal unto Me." If St. Peter was sorely humbled then, his Master must soon be humbled too—humbled to the very dust. Both were crucified. Both having died once, live still. Christ lives in His own power, Peter lives by

[1] *Cf. S. Joan. Chrysostom, Hom.* 32 *in Rom.* ii.

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the power of Christ. If men heap glory upon the servant, it is for love of that servant's Lord, who died a shameful death, but has risen with much glory from the dead.

Hidden beneath the jewelled tiara, the crown of thorns pierces the Pontiff's brow. The hair-shirt has oft-times been worn in secret beneath his robes of whiteness, for the Holy Father is a pilgrim upon earth, who must tread the pilgrim's way — the blood-stained path his Master trod. But, on the other hand, the external splendour of the Papal throne is a fitting homage to the majesty of Jesus Christ. If Christ were not God, the stately procession in St. Peter's Church, in honour of Christ's earthly Vicar, were impossible to-day.

Fling, then, St. Peter's doors wide open, that the Pope may enter for the solemn rite. Let him be borne aloft, amongst his own, with due state and ceremony. A welcome to the Noble Guard, for the Pope's they are. Let the ostrich feathers wave and Egypt pay her tribute, for out of Egypt hath God called His Son.

> "Gaude et lætare terra Ægypti,
> Quia in medio tui sedet princeps populi Dei."

From the treasure-house of all the ages, bring forth, with lavish hand, magnificence. Spare nothing of that which may set forth the royalty of the King. Let the silver trumpets sound their note of joy throughout the House of God.

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Undisturbed by traitors' cavil, let Christian hearts exult with gladness. Ye sons of Iscariot, for all time hold your peace. *Wasted* never, in the sight of heaven, is the offering of our faith. He who, even as we watch, is speeding on his way, occupies the place held first by him whom once, O Judas, thou knewest well. Like thee, he denied his God. Unlike thee, he has wept his tears of bitter sorrow, and received forgiveness from his Saviour. To him the care of sheep and lambs was given by the Shepherd of the flock. In his hands are placed the keys of heaven. . . . And now he is passing. Lo! he is blessing his people, the light of love is kindling his aged eyes. He is Peter. He is the Vicegerent of our Lord. Look once again —"look carefully," and, looking, you shall behold the fulfilment of the promises of Christ.

Conclusion to be drawn from the Gospel narrative.

WE are now in a position to answer the question with which we began this investigation. Not only is it clear that the splendour of the Papacy is the inevitable growth of the divine seed cast into the earth by our Lord Himself; that Pius the Tenth, "the servant of the servants of God," is one, as in service, so also in authority, with the Prince of the Apostles, to whom it was said in the beginning, "Let him that is first amongst you be as he that is the least"; but, also, we trust

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that we have established the fact that the spiritual rule and authority of the successor of Simon, by Christ named Peter, is proof irrefragable of the Divinity of the carpenter's reputed Son, who gave to a simple fisherman the keys of His heavenly kingdom, and set him to fish—no longer in the waters of Gennesareth, that he might obtain food for the bodily needs of mortal men, but rather through country lanes and quiet villages and seething towns, thus to catch undying souls for God. To that fisherman have been given the earth for his inheritance and the ends of the world for his possession.

None could accomplish such a triumph for the caster of nets on the shores of the Galilæan lake save One, who Himself came forth from the Bosom of God. Is He only a carpenter who has effected this wonder? Can He be merely the son of Joseph? If so, let His rivals produce yet another carpenter who has done a similar work for yet another fisherman! What other fisherman is there (if such a one there be, may his name be told us?) who has been made by any other carpenter the spiritual ruler of generation after generation and of continent added unto continent?

Nor can it be with any truth objected that this is rhetoric, void of reality. For millions upon millions Simon Peter's boat has, in simple

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fact, become the very Chair of Truth and the Throne of the King of Kings; for, as of old, from that frail barque, Christ stayed the storm and gave peace to those who trusted His watchful governance, so now, from the Seat that He has chosen, does He still compel assent to His word, and thence does He rule, upon whose shoulder hath been laid the government and the care of all mankind.

The claims of the Papacy no new thing.

Peter holds the keys. Through Peter, Christ absolves from sin. Through Peter, Christ witnesses to the truth that He has brought to earth from heaven. Through Peter, Christ feeds His sheep and lambs. Thus are the merciful purposes of God Incarnate fulfilled on behalf of the children of men.

THE Papacy never hesitates as to its own story. Its account of itself cannot be shaken or overthrown. It rests secure, in tranquil confidence, on the promises of Christ,—for Christ is God.

> "From what has been, we learn not to fear for what is to come."[1]

Its links with the past.

The spiritual children of the Vicar of Jesus of Nazareth are no idle dreamers of dreams, no

[1] *Cf.* St. John Chrysostom, *Cont. Jud. et Gent.* 15 : Εἶδες προῤῥήσεως ἰσχύν, καὶ πύλαι ᾅδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς; Ἀπὸ τούτων πίστευε περὶ τῶν μελλόντων καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν περιέσται.

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mere visionaries, with eyes fixed upon a past that is dead, forgetful of the realities of the day that is living. In the present they live and move and have their being. Nevertheless, they forget not that they are the heirs of the traditions of all the Saints, and of all the ages. Catholics should be ever ready, if challenged, both to show that the theory of coincidences is manifestly inadequate as an explanation of the Christian facts, and also prepared to prove from the pages of history that the Papacy is no mere afterthought, but can be traced back, link by link, through the intervening centuries, to Apostolic days. Thus, in every age may they make their own the words, first uttered by the great Augustine, when (A.D. 391) he was confronted on the one side by a new heresy, and on the other by the ancient phenomenon of Peter still living in his See and feeding still the sheep of Christ:

In the fourth century,

Testimony of St. Augustine.

> "I am held in the communion of the Catholic Church by the succession of bishops from the very Chair of Peter the Apostle, to whom the Lord commended His sheep to be fed, up to the present episcopate. Lastly, I am held by the very name of Catholic, which, not without cause amid so many heresies, this Church has alone retained, so that, although all heretics wish themselves to be called Catholics, yet, if any stranger should ask them where the Catholics meet for worship, not one of the heretics would venture to point out his own temple or house."[1]

[1] *Contra Ep. Manich. quam Vocant Fundam.*, iv. 5.

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And, again:

> "The Chair of the Roman Church, on which Peter sat, and on which Anastasius sits to-day."[1]

With the See of Peter, Augustine had, throughout his troubled episcopal career, constant relations.

For example, during his struggle with Pelagianism he was present at two Councils—the first at Carthage, the second at Milevis in Numidia. At the close of each of these synods, he, together with his fellow-bishops, sent a letter to Pope St. Innocent the First, containing an entreaty to the Holy See to take action against this new heresy.

The Council of Carthage wrote to the Pope (A.D. 416) in the following terms:

> "We have thought it fitting, O Lord our Brother, to make known to Your Holiness what we have done, that to the statutes of our comparative littleness be added also the authority of the Apostolic See (ut statutis nostræ mediocritatis etiam Apostolicæ Sedis adhibeatur auctoritas). [The Bishops go on to beg that, even though Pelagius may have been held personally guiltless], the error and impiety itself which has many defenders may be condemned even by the authority of the Apostolic See (etiam auctoritate Apostolicæ Sedis anathematizanda est). May Your Holiness [they entreat the Pope] have com-

[1] *Contra Litt. Petil.*, ii. 51; St. Augustine (Epis. liii. 2) gives a complete list of the Popes from St. Peter to Anastasius, the Pope of the time.

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passion on our pastoral hearts, and consider how deadly is the consequence for the sheep of Christ [to listen to the Pelagian doctrines unchecked. They conclude by assuring the Pope that they are confident that] after [he] has perused [their] episcopal decrees, [he] will give a judgment, through which all may rejoice in the mercy of the Lord."[1]

The Council of Milevis, held the next year, was, if possible, even more emphatic and precise in its statement as to the authority of the Holy See. In the letter sent to the Pope, signed by St. Augustine, after an exposure of the unscriptural character of the Pelagian heresy, we find the following statement addressed to the Pope, who, at the beginning of the letter, is stated to have been placed in the Apostolic See by the Lord through the chief gift of His grace (quia te Dominus gratiæ suæ præcipuo munere in Sede Apostolicâ collocavit):

> "But we think that through the mercy of the Lord our God who deigns to rule thee [the Pope] when thou dost consult Him, and to hear thee when thou dost pray to Him, those who hold such perverse and baneful opinions will yield the more easily to the authority of thy Holiness, which *is derived from the authority of the Holy Scriptures*, so that we may rejoice together over their correction rather than together grieve over their [spiritual] death."[2]

We may observe incidentally that in this

[1] S. Augustini, Episcopi *Epistola*, clxxv., *alias* xc.
[2] *Ibid.*, clxxvi., *alias* xcii.

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letter these African bishops term St. Jerome their brother, and the son of the Pope.[1]

When the answer to these conciliar addresses to the Holy See had been received from Rome, St. Augustine wrote and preached enthusiastic, significant words, which, even if they stood alone, would be absolutely decisive as to his attitude towards the Chair of Peter. It is certain that no one who did not believe as Catholics believe to-day could have expressed himself as follows:

> "Concerning this matter, decrees of two Councils have been sent to the Apostolic See. Thence also rescripts have come. *The cause has been finished.* Would that now at length the error might be finished. Therefore we warn them that they may attend; we teach them that they may be instructed; we pray that they may be changed."[2]

And of St. Possidius.

St. Possidius was for more than forty years the intimate friend and colleague of St. Augustine, at whose deathbed he was present. He may therefore be regarded in a special sense as the interpreter of his mind. Now, St. Possidius writes as follows of the rise of Pelagianism:

> "He [Augustine] laboured also for close on ten years against the Pelagians, new heretics of

[1] Sanctus filius tuus, frater et compresbyter noster Hieronymus.

[2] S. Augustini, *Sermo* cxxxi. *Cf.* also other passages from the writings of St. Augustine, quoted above, pp. 130, 131, *n.*

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our times, subtle disputants, who wrote with a dangerous cleverness, and spoke wherever they could, whether in public or in private. . . . And since these same perverse men strove in their ambition to persuade the Apostolic See to accept their treachery, it was provided in African synods of holy bishops, as a matter of utmost urgency (instantissime gestum est), that the holy Popes of the City—first the venerable Innocent, and then the holy Zosimus, his successor—should be convinced that that sect should be held in reprobation as something which must be condemned by Catholic faith. But these bishops of so great a See, each in his own time marking these Pelagians and cutting them off from the members of the Church, having sent letters both to the Africans of the West and to the Churches of the East, judged that they should be anathematized and avoided by all Catholics (eos anathematizandos et devitandos ab omnibus Catholicis censuerunt). Now, the most pious Emperor Honorius, hearing and obeying *such a judgment of the Catholic Church of God* put forth concerning them (tale de illis Ecclesiæ Dei Catholicæ prolatum judicium audiens ac sequens), declared that they were condemned by his laws, and ought to be classed amongst the heretics."[1]

From Possidius, the biographer of Augustine, we turn instinctively to Ambrose, his father in the faith (A.D. 340-397).

And of St. Ambrose.

Now, St. Ambrose in his writings frequently terms St. Peter the strength or foundation of the Church (*firmamentum Ecclesiæ*).

This great Doctor is the author of the well-known words:

[1] *Vita S. Augustini Episcopi, Auctore Possidio*, cap. xviii.

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> "Therefore where Peter is, there is the Church. Where the Church is, there is no death, but life eternal. And on this account Christ added, 'And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.'"[1]

It was St. Ambrose, also, who dictated the words which the Council of Aquileia addressed in 381 to the Emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius, insisting that they should accord their protection to the Roman Church, the centre whence the rights ot worshipful communion radiate on all.[2]

It is also St. Ambrose who warned the Novatian heretics of his day that—

> "They share not the inheritance of Peter, who do not hold to the See of Peter, which they afflict by shameless schism."[3]

Again, it is St. Ambrose who tells us how his brother Satyrus, not yet a Christian, having suffered shipwreck and having been saved from death, determined to seek Baptism at the first opportunity:

> "But he was not so eager as to be without caution, for we know that very many there are

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[1] *Enarratio in Psalm* xi. 30. "Ubi ergo Petrus, ibi Ecclesia; ubi Ecclesia, ibi nulla mors, sed vita æterna," etc.

[2] Inde enim in omnes venerandæ communionis jura dimanant (*Mansi*, iii. 622).

[3] Non habent enim Petri hæreditatem, qui Petri Sedem non habent, quam impiâ divisione discerpunt (*De Pœnitentiâ*, lib. i., vii. 33). A few MSS., of inferior authority, read "Petri *Fidem*."

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who, through over-eagerness, lay aside due prudence. So he called to himself a bishop, and as he did not believe that any grace was true which was not of the true faith, he inquired of him whether he was in communion *with the Catholic bishops — that is, with the Roman Church.*"[1]

And of St. Hilary

The testimony of St. Hilary of Poictiers (A.D. 346) is equally emphatic. He writes as follows:

"This will seem to be best, and by far the most fitting thing, if to the Head—that is, to the See of the Apostle Peter—the priests of the Lord report from every one of the provinces."[2]

And of St. Optatus.

So also St. Optatus[3] (A.D. 370):

"For a man who knows, to wander is a sin. Those who do not know may sometimes receive

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[1] *De Excessu Fratris sui Satyri*, lib. i. 47. "Advocavit ad se Episcopum, nec ullam veram putavit nisi veræ fidei gratiam, percontatusque ex eo est utrumnam cum Episcopis Catholicis, hoc est, cum Romanâ Ecclesiâ *conveniret?*" We are irresistibly reminded of the well-known words of Irenæus, written nearly two hundred years previously: "Ad hanc enim Ecclesiam [Romanam] propter potentiorem principalitatem necesse est omnem *convenire* ecclesiam" (*Adv. Hæret.*, iii. 3, *n.* 2).

[2] *Fragm.*, ii. *n.* 9.

[3] St. Augustine held St. Optatus and his teaching in very high esteem. Thus he refers to "the most persuasive writings" of Optatus, whom he calls "a Bishop of Catholic Communion, of venerable memory" (*Con. Ep. Parmen.*, I. iii. 5); he links his name with that of Ambrose (*De Unit. Ecclesiæ*, xix.), and tells us how the Donatists, during a conference at Carthage, appealed to a passage from Optatus (of which they strove to

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pardon. Thou, then, canst not deny that thou dost know that in the city of Rome the episcopal Chair was conferred on Peter first, in which the Head [*caput*] of all the Apostles, Peter, sat, whence he was called Kepha,[1] in which one Chair unity should be preserved by all, lest the other Apostles should arrogate each one something of his own, so that he might be convicted at once of being a schismatic and a sinner, who against that unique (*singularem*) Chair should set up another."[2]

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suppress the context), as to a great authority (velut aliquid validissimum probaturi), (*Brevicul. Coll. cum Donatist.*). He adds (*Ad Donatist. post collat.* xxxi.) that when the Donatist trickery was discovered in their quotation from Optatus, no one could refrain from laughter. (St. Augustine repeats the same story in Ep. cxli.) Harnack calls attention to the influence of St. Optatus over the great Doctor of the West : "In the contest with Manichæism and Donatism, Augustine, *following Optatus*, etc." (*Outlines of the History of Dogma*, p. 154); and again (*History of Dogma*, v. 38, 39), "But even when he entered into the Donatist controversy, Augustine did so as a man of the second, or, indeed, the third, generation. . . . In this sphere Optatus had worked before him." Indeed, a great similarity, not only in the line of argument they adopt, but even in mode of expression is often to be observed in the writings of these two Saints, and Augustine may often be interpreted in terms of Optatus.

[1] St. Optatus evidently connects the word Kepha in some way with κεφαλή (Greek for head). Here, of course, he is mistaken, unless he be indulging in "paranomasia," or pun (as was often the way of St. Augustine); but the mistake—if mistake there be—shows how clear was St. Optatus as to the position of St. Peter in the Apostolic College. He again calls St. Peter "Caput Apostolorum" in VII. iii. 102.

[2] *De Schismate Donat.*, II. ii. 31.

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And, once more:

"We have read that Peter, who is our chief (*principem scilicet nostrum*), received the saving keys. . . . How comes it, then, that you strive to usurp for yourselves (*vobis usurpare contenditis*) the keys of the kingdom of heaven, you who fight with sacrilege against the Chair of Peter . . .? Your ancestors went in the way of wickedness to divide the Church. They went on the path of sinners, when they endeavoured to divide Christ (whose garments not even the Jews were willing to rend), though the Apostle Paul cries out, 'Is, then, Christ divided?' Of the aforesaid prerogatives [or, to use modern terminology, *marks of the Church*], the Chair is, as we have said, the first, which we have proved is ours through Peter, and this mark carries with it the Angel [*i.e.*, lawful bishop or jurisdiction]. . . . Recognize, then, though late, that you are impious children, branches broken from the tree, tendrils torn from the vine, a stream cut off from its source. For a river, which is small, and does not rise from itself, cannot be the fountain-head; nor can a branch, that has been lopped away, be the tree, since a tree once planted has its own roots, and a branch, after it has been cut off the trunk, withers up . . . It has been proved that we are in the Catholic Church . . . and *through the Chair of Peter, which is ours*, the other prerogatives are with us too."[1]

We are reminded of St. Augustine's appeal to these same Donatists:

"You know what is the Catholic Church, and what has been cut off from the vine. If there

[1] *De Schismate Donat.*, II. v. 35; ix. 38.

be any amongst you possessed of caution, let them come, let them live in the vine."[1]

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St. Optatus has acutely observed that the marks of the Church are closely connected one with another as are the fingers on a hand, so that, though they be divided, still one cannot be separated from another; but to be in communion with the Chair of Peter is the first mark of being in the true Church, from which all the others follow.[2]

And of St. Jerome.

And St. Jerome, writing (A.D. 376) to Pope Damasus:

> "I cry aloud, if any is joined to the Chair of Peter, he is my man. Meletius, Vitalis, and Paulinus [these were the three Bishops whose claims to the See of Antioch were under discussion] say that they cleave to thee [the Pope]. If it was only one of them who said this I could believe it."[3]

And to the same purpose he had already made his profession of faith:

[1] "Scitis Catholica quid sit, et quid sit præcisum a vite: si qui sunt inter vos cauti, veniant, vivant in vite" (Ps. c. p. Donat.). *Catholica*, we may note, is used as a substantive by both Optatus and Augustine.

[2] "Quas constat ita sibi connexas et individuas esse, ut intelligatur unam ab alterâ separari non posse. Etenim numerantur in nomine, sed uno intellectu suo junguntur in corpore, ut in manu digiti, quos intervallis singulos videmus esse distinctos. Probatum est per Cathedram Petri, quæ nostra est, per ipsam, et ceteras dotes apud nos esse" (*De Schismate Donat.*, V. ix. 35, 38).

[3] *Ep.* xvi.

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"I judged that I ought to consult the Chair of Peter, and the [Roman] faith praised by the mouth of the Apostle. . . . Away with envy, away with all canvassing of the Roman power; it is with the successor of the Fisherman and the disciple of the Cross that I speak. Following no one as chief but Christ, I am linked in communion with thy Blessedness—that is, with the Chair of Peter. *On that Rock I know the Church was built.* Whosoever shall eat the Lamb outside that house is profane. If any was not with Noe in the Ark, he must perish beneath the sway of the deluge. I know nothing of Vitalis, Meletius I reject, Paulinus is a stranger to me. Whoso gathereth not with thee, scattereth. That is to say, who belongs not to Christ belongs to Antichrist, . . . *Define, I beseech thee, if it pleases thee*, and I will not fear to speak of three hypostases. *If thou biddest, let a new creed be established after the Nicene.* . . . Let three hypostases be no more mentioned, *if thou dost please*, and let one be held . . . or, *if thou dost think fit* that we ought to say, with the explanations that are given, that there are three hypostases, we do not refuse. . . . Wherefore I beseech thy Blessedness by the Crucified Saviour of the world, by the Consubstantial Trinity, *to give me authority by a letter from thee* as to whether I am not to speak or am to speak of [three] hypostases . . . at the same time I ask thee to inform me with whom I am to communicate at Antioch."[1]

It has been urged that this clear affirmation of the necessity of communion with the Holy See, and of the authoritative defining power of the Pope in fundamental points of Christian dogma, was written by St. Jerome "in the

[1] *Ep.* xv.

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exuberance of his early manhood." They who thus argue seem to forget that the earlier in the life of this great Doctor of the Church these words were written (he was between thirty and forty years old at the time), the nearer to the Apostolic days, and therefore the more emphatic, is his testimony to the tradition as to the prerogative of Peter, received by the Church from the Apostles.

Needless, however, to say, that St. Jerome never wavered in the constancy with which he adhered to this and to every other doctrine which he had received from his fathers in the Faith. If we turn to another letter, written by him thirty-eight years later, and only two years before his death, we shall find precisely the same sentiments. To a lady about to embrace the religious life, he wrote (A.D. 414):

> "I had nearly left out what is most important.[1] . . . I feel that I ought to give you

[1] This goes far to show the irrelevance of any argument against the Catholic doctrine concerning the Holy See that may be drawn from the mere *silence* of some Father of the Church. Had St. Jerome forgotten, as he easily might have forgotten—and, in fact, nearly did forget—to add the warning which he writes "is most important," a certain school of Anglicans would have been only too glad to argue in some such manner as follows: "If St. Jerome really held the view of modern Roman Catholics as to the 'importance' of 'holding the Faith of the Apostolic See,' it is out of the question that he should not have referred to a matter of such vital consequence," etc. The

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> this advice, to hold the faith of holy Innocent" [the Pope of the time] "and of the Apostolic See, and not to receive any foreign doctrine, however prudent and clever you may deem yourself to be."[1]

Pope Damasus at the Roman Council of 382 promulgated the list of the Sacred Books accepted as canonical by the Church. With reference to the preparation of this list St. Jerome writes that it was his duty to help the Pope, and reply to Synodal questions from East and West.[2] In fact, he seems to have anticipated in his own person the functions of one of the modern Roman Congregations.

We may quote one last instance of the attitude of St. Jerome to the Chair of Peter. Against Rufinus he wrote:[3]

> "What does he call his faith—that which is the strength of the Roman Church, or that which is in the volumes of Origen? If he

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danger of such a line of reasoning as this is obvious. So long as we confine our attention to what has been actually said or written, we are dealing with tangible facts, and, consequently, are standing on firm ground. The moment we leave those facts, and begin to discuss what we think ought to have been written, we find ourselves sliding into the unsafe waters of surmise and mere guesswork.

[1] *Ep.* cxxx.

[2] "Cum in chartis Ecclesiasticis juvarem Damasum Romanæ urbis Episcopum, et Orientis atque Occidentis synodicis consultationibus responderem" (*Ep.* cxxiii. 10).

[3] *Adv. Ruf.*, lib. i., p. 461.

> answer 'the Roman,' then are we Catholics, who have borrowed nothing of Origen's error."

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Martin Luther was accustomed to remark that "one might as well try to strain milk through a coal-sack as to get truth from the Fathers." Certainly these ancient Fathers labour under the grievous disadvantage, in the eyes of innovators, of having been Catholics. This, in fact, is the head and front of their offending. Still, at least it must be admitted that they bear witness to the ancient Faith.

Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome are the chief Doctors of the Latin Church. If we turn to their heroic contemporary, Athanasius of Alexandria (A.D. 295-373) we shall find the same identification of the successor of Peter in his official teaching with Peter himself and with Peter's guidance from on high. Thus, in reference to the persecution of Pope Liberius (in consequence of his defence of the Consubstantiality of the Eternal Son with the Father), St. Athanasius wrote concerning Constantius and his Arian eunuchs:

And of St. Athanasius.

> "The Ethiopian eunuch believed Philip when he taught him about the Saviour; but the eunuchs of Constantius *cannot put up with Peter* when he makes his confession, and turn away from the Father when He reveals the Son."[1]

[1] *Hist. Arian. ad Mon.* 38. *Cf.* the claim of Pope St. Julius, advanced by him in his letter to the Eusebians,

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The inference is clear. Liberius in his teaching had spoken with the voice of Peter, to whom our Lord declared that not flesh and blood, but God the Father, had revealed that He was the Christ.

And of St. Peter Chrysologus.

So St. Peter Chrysologus had written:

> "Blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own See, gives the truth of faith to those who seek it."[1]

In the third century,

Testimony of St. Cyprian.

In the preceding century we find St. Cyprian writing to a Bishop who had inclined to the Novatian heresy, but had asked the Saint to inform Pope Cornelius that he had come to a better mind.

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which has been preserved for us by St. Athanasius in his *Apologia c. Arianos* (35). Ἃ γὰρ παρειλήφαμεν παρὰ τοῦ μακαρίου Πέτρου τοῦ ἀποστόλου, ταῦτα καὶ ὑμῖν δηλῶ. (For those same things, which we have received from the Blessed Peter the Apostle, do I make known also to you.) With this we may compare similar words put by St. Athanasius into the mouth of Pope Liberius: Οὔτε τοιαύτην πώποτε παράδοσιν ἔσχομεν παρὰ τῶν Πατέρων, τῶν καὶ αὐτῶν παραλαβόντων παρὰ τοῦ μακαρίου καὶ μεγάλου ἀποστόλου Πέτρου (*Historia Arianorum ad Monachos*, 36). In the previous chapter St. Athanasius had complained that the Arians "stretched their madness so far" as not to spare Liberius, and had no shame, though his throne was Apostolic, and cared not that Rome was the capital of the Roman world. Here we see the order of respect due in the mind of the great Athanasius to the Eternal City, first because of its ecclesiastical, and, only in the second place, on account of its secular, dignity . . . ἀλλὰ καὶ μέχρι τῶν ἐκεῖ τὴν μανίαν ἐξέτειναν· καὶ οὐχ ὅτι ἀποστολικός ἐστι θρόνος ἠδέσθησαν, οὐθ' ὅτι μητρόπολις Ῥώμη τῆς Ῥωμανίας ἐστὶν, εὐλαβήθησαν.

[1] *Epist. ad Eutych.*

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> "You also wrote that I should send a copy of the same letter to our fellow-bishop Cornelius, that he might know that you now communicate *with him—that is, with the Catholic Church.*"[1]

And to Cornelius himself he wrote, apologizing for his delay in acknowledging him, but saying that he had at least urged all those who sailed to Rome

> "to recognize and hold fast the womb and root of the Catholic Church."[2]

By this last phrase Cyprian probably meant "the womb and root, which is the Catholic Church," though Harnack and many critics (Protestant as well as Catholic) find here a statement that the Roman See is the womb and root of the Church. However this may be, it is evidently assumed that not to communicate with Cornelius was to be separated from the Church. Were any doubt on this subject possible, it would be removed by the assurance given by St. Cyprian to the Pope, that a common letter had been sent to every bishop in Africa, exhorting them

> "to approve firmly and hold fast *thee and thy communion—that is*, the unity and charity alike of the Catholic Church."

And of St. Dionysius of Alexandria.

In this same third century we find that, when St. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, the second See in Christendom, was falsely

[1] *Ep.* lv. 1. [2] *Ep.* xlviii. 3.

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accused of heretical teaching, he appealed to his namesake and only ecclesiastical superior, St. Dionysius of Rome, as judge of his faith. Our informant is his successor St. Athanasius, who himself obeyed the Papal command to furnish his own defence against a similar charge, and was also vindicated by the Pope.[1]

Witness of the ante-Nicene Church.

The late Mr. Allies, who is well known to have been thoroughly versed in the writings of Christian antiquity, was accustomed to say that a veil had been hung over the ante-Nicene Church, so scanty and obscure are its early records. However, Cardinal Newman has collected seventeen distinct instances of authoritative action on the part of the Popes establishing the supreme position of the Apostolic See of Peter in times anterior to the Council of Nicæa.[2] Nor should it be forgotten that St. Cyprian lived no later than the middle of the third century.

In the second century.

Our knowledge of the second century has been stated to be "but a succession of small scraps."[3]

It may be of interest to take up two of these "scraps" and submit them to a cursory examination.

[1] S. Athanasius, *Epistola de Decretis Nicæni Synodi*, 25; *De Sententiâ Dionysii*, 13; *Apol. contra Arian.*, 20; *Hist. Arian. ad Monach.*, xi.; Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 3.

[2] *Development of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 157, 158.

[3] *Bishop Gore and the Catholic Claims*, by Dom John Chapman, O.S.B. (p. 65).

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Let the first be a letter from the great martyr, St. Ignatius of Antioch, who died for the Faith A.D. 114. He wrote thus to the Church of Rome of his day:

Witness of St. Ignatius of Antioch.

> "Ye have taught others; I would therefore that those things may be firmly established, which, teaching, you have commanded."[1]

Witness of St. Dionysius of Corinth.

The second "scrap" shall be another letter, not now from Asia, but from Greece. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, as quoted by Eusebius,[2] writing to the Romans (*circa* A.D. 170), informs them that a letter recently received from Soter, their bishop, had been accepted "as that of a loving father to his children"; and that it will be read by them, together with the Holy Scriptures, as the earlier Roman letter, which their fathers had received from Clement, was still read at their meetings for religious worship.

In the first century.

Action of Pope St. Clement.

This quotation brings us to the famous Epistle of Pope St. Clement to the Church of Corinth. Of this letter, which was already described as "most authoritative" by St. Irenæus in the second century, Bishop Lightfoot writes: "It may perhaps seem strange to describe this noble remonstrance as the first step towards

[1] *Ep. ad Rom.*, 3, 4. In the inscription of this letter St. Ignatius twice writes of the Church of Rome as "presiding" (*προκάθηται ἐν τόπῳ χωρίου Ῥωμαίων*, and, again, *προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης*).

[2] H. E., iv. 23.

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Papal domination. And yet, undoubtedly, this is the case." If so, "the first step," it will be admitted, was taken very early.

It was during the lifetime of St. John that "no small dissension"[1] broke out in the ancient Church of Corinth. Corinth is nearer to Ephesus, where the Apostle whom "Jesus loved" was still living, than to Rome, and Corinth was in at least as frequent ecclesiastical relations with Ephesus as with Rome. Yet we find that it is Clement, not John, who exercises authority over Christians in Greece. So far from evincing any hesitation as to thus interfering in the affairs of a distant Church, Clement apologizes for his delay in writing to restore peace and unity—a delay which had been inevitable in consequence of the persecution which the Church of Rome had just undergone. In this letter the Pope declared that he would send two "venerable messengers" (in a later age they would have been termed Legates *a Latere*) "to show how great is our anxiety for peace amongst you." He says that he will "indeed be happy" if the Corinthians "obey," but concludes that

> "If certain persons should be disobedient unto the words spoken *by God through us*, let them understand that they will entangle themselves in no slight transgression and danger, but we shall be guiltless of this sin."[2]

[1] St. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, *n.* 3.
[2] *Ad Cor.* lix. 1.

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Now, who was this Clement who wrote in such terms as these to that "ancient" Church, as he terms it in his Epistle, which had been so specially favoured by receiving two of the greatest letters of the Apostle of the Gentiles? Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome identify him with St. Paul's "fellow-labourer" whose "name is in the book of life."[1] According to Tertullian, writing A.D. 199, the Roman Church at that time claimed that Clement had been ordained by St. Peter;[2] and St. Irenæus tells us that Clement "had seen the blessed Apostles and conversed with them, and had the preaching of the Apostles still ringing in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes; nor was he alone in this, for many were then surviving who had received instructions from the Apostles."[3] If ever such has been seen on earth, this Clement was a "primitive Saint." He was also a primitive Pope.

"The messengers," too, are described in the Epistle as "faithful and prudent men who have walked amongst us from youth unto old age without blame." In all probability, they were Christians who had been living in Rome before the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul. Thus are we carried back to Apostolic times.

[1] Philip. iv. 3.
[2] *De Præscript*, xxxii.
[3] *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, *n.* 3.

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Who will doubt that the great sayings and events in the life of Christ, some of which have been recorded only once in the Gospels—others not at all[1]—were constantly related by word of mouth by the Apostles, who had heard and seen them, to their children in the Faith? It is difficult, in the very nature of things, to find much positive proof of such oral transmission of truth, but this in no way affects the certainty of its having taken place.[2]

In the case, therefore, of any Corinthian who might hesitate to "obey," one of those messengers would remind him (as Optatus and Augustine were afterwards to remind the Donatists concerning a later Pope) that Clement "sat in the very Chair of Peter." That envoy might well add that he had "still ringing in his ears" the words with which the Prince of the Apostles was wont, in all humility, to tell how to him (as had already by that time been set down in the Holy Gospel) the Lord had promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that to him (as St. John was soon to write) had been entrusted the pastoral care of both the sheep and lambs of Christ. It should always be remembered that Clement composed his Epistle, and that the Church of Rome actually exercised authority over the Church of Corinth *before the*

[1] *Cf.* John xxi. 25.
[2] *Cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 2, iii. 14, etc.

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Fourth Gospel was yet penned.[1] So far, however, from there being any "disobedience" to the Pope's commands, his letter, as we have seen from Eusebius, was treasured and read, together with the writings of the Apostles themselves, for "the instruction" of the Faithful during the public worship of God.

Now, supposing that the relative positions had been reversed, and that "no small dissension" had broken out in the local Church of Rome—can we even imagine that the Bishop of Corinth would have written "a most authoritative letter" to the Roman Christians in terms in any way similar to those which Clement employed to the Christians at Corinth? And had he done so, is it conceivable that many years afterwards his letter would be still read, together with the Holy Scriptures, in the public worship of the Church in Rome? These are questions which no one will be found to answer in the affirmative. To what cause, then, can this enormous difference existing even in Apostolic times between the Churches of Rome and Corinth be assigned other than the fact that the former was already revered as the See and Chair of Peter?

[1] If the persecution to which reference is made in St. Clement's letter be that under Domitian, which seems on the whole probable, its date will be about A.D. 96. If the persecution be that under Nero, as is the opinion of many, it will have been written some thirty years earlier, about A.D. 68.

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The Papacy does not owe its position to the temporal power of Rome.

NOTWITHSTANDING all evidence to the contrary, it is sometimes maintained that the power of the Papacy grew gradually, solely in consequence of the temporal influence of Rome, the capital of the world, of which the ambition of the Popes and their passion for aggrandizement led them to take unworthy advantage.

Unquestionably, it is possible that the Popes might have claimed that to which they had no moral right, and no doubt the position of imperial Rome would have aided them in advancing such pretensions. But the question arises at once,—Could they have kept up such a usurpation, and been always consistent, always successful in the end, as champions and guardians of the orthodox Faith ?

Tertullian, after his fall into heresy, opposed Pope Callistus ; St. Cyprian was on one occasion in opposition to Pope St. Stephen. All will now confess that in each case the Popes were the defenders of a principle vital to Christianity. So in the long struggle with Arianism, with Nestorianism, with Eutychianism, appeals were made by all parties concerned to the authority of Rome, and the Popes were always, in the final issue, triumphant in their vindication of the Faith.

There was another line of avowedly ambitious

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prelates, and another great city, not on the Tiber, but on the Bosphorus. What, then, was the course of Byzantine ambition? By the acknowledgment of the Greeks to-day, nineteen Patriarchs of Constantinople during the first five hundred years of Christianity were notoriously heretical.[1] For two hundred, and more, out of the first eight hundred years, that great See was admittedly in a state of heresy, and separated from the unity of the Church.[2]

At the present time the result is visible. We see only a schism outside of Western civilization.

Whence came the difference of issue between the pretensions of "Old Rome" and those of the "New Rome," between the See of Peter and the See of Photius?

Only one answer can be given to this question. It is to be found in the promises of Christ.

The greatness of the City is hardly ever

[1] *Cf.* Duchesne, *Les Églises separées de Rome*, 1896, pp. 164, 165.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

I. On account of St. Athanasius and Arianism, from the Council of Sardica (343) to the succession of St. John Chrysostom (398)	55 years
II. About the condemnation of Chrysostom (404-415)	11 „
III. With regard to Acacius and the Henotikon of Zeno (484-519)	35 „
IV. On account of Monothelism (640-681)	41 „
V. On account of Iconoclasm (726-787) ...	61 „
	203 years

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referred to by any of the Fathers, excepting to repudiate it as the cause of that city's spiritual sway.

Thus St. John Chrysostom, in the magnificent peroration of his last Homily on the Epistle to the Romans:

> "I love Rome, though I *might* praise her on other grounds—for her greatness, her antiquity, etc. . . . The heavens are not so bright when the sun shoots forth its rays as is the city of the Romans, shedding forth the light of these two lamps throughout the world. Thence shall Paul be caught up, thence Peter shall rise. Consider and be amazed. What a sight shall Rome then behold. . . . It is for this that I admire the city, not for its much gold . . . but because of these two pillars of the Church. . . . Would that I could see his tomb [Paul's]. . . . This body fortifies the city . . . and with it the body of Peter, for while living he honoured him [and wrote]: 'I went up to visit Peter.'"[1]

In another place the same great Doctor of the Church spoke thus of Antioch:

> "God has had great account of this city of Antioch, as He has shown, indeed, especially in that He ordered Peter, *the ruler of the whole world*, to whom He entrusted the keys of heaven, to whom He committed the office of sweeping the whole world of its plunder, to pass a long time here, so that our city stood *to him in the place of the whole world*. . . It was right that she, who first was adorned with the name of Christian, should receive the first of the Apostles as her pastor. But though we received

[1] *Cf. Hom. in Rom.* xvi. 17; xxxii. 2.

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him as teacher, we did not retain him to the end, but *we gave him up* to royal Rome."[1]

The Council, held under St. Damasus in A.D. 382 (St. Jerome, as we have seen, was the Pope's confidential secretary at the time) summed up the traditional teaching in these words:

> "Although all the Catholic churches spread throughout the world are one bridal chamber of Christ, yet the Holy Roman Church has been placed over the other churches, not by decrees of Councils, but by the voice of our Lord and Saviour in the Gospel, who gave it the Primacy when He said: 'Thou art Peter. . . .' There was added also the fellowship of the Blessed Apostle Paul, who . . . on the selfsame day was crowned together with Peter with a glorious death in the City of Rome; and together they consecrated this Holy Roman Church to Christ the Lord, and set it above all cities of the world by their glorious presence and venerable triumph.
>
> "Therefore the first See is that of Peter the Apostle, the Roman Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[2]

It was therefore in full harmony with the tradition handed down from antiquity that the great Irish missionary, St. Columbanus, early in the seventh century, wrote as follows:

[1] *Hom. in inscript.*, *Act.* ii. 6.

[2] This Council goes on to lay it down that "the second See was consecrated at Alexandria in the name of Peter by Mark, his disciple . . the third See of the most blessed Apostle Peter is held in honour at Antioch, because he dwelt there before he came to Rome" (*Mansi*, viii. 158. *Hefele Councils*, vol. iv., pp. 43, 45).

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> "We Irish, though dwelling at the far ends of the earth, are all disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul. . . . Neither heretic, nor Jew, nor schismatic has ever been amongst us ; but the Catholic Faith, just as it was first delivered to us by yourselves, the successors of the Apostles, is held by us unchanged. . . . We are devoted (literally 'bound,' *devincti*) to the Chair of Peter, and although Rome is great and renowned, through that Chair alone is she looked on as great and illustrious amongst us."

We need hardly say that there is no intention of denying that St. Peter fixed his seat in Rome in order to preach with the greatest possible effect a world-wide religion in and from the capital of the world. Human means must be adapted to attain their ends, even when those ends are themselves divine. Rome was the imperial city. The secular pre-eminence of Rome was no doubt the determining cause that led the Apostle, upon whom Christ had bestowed the Primacy, finally there to fix his Chair.

Towards the close of the fifth century Pope Gelasius wrote as follows:

> "Christ willed that of the Apostles one should be first, and directed his steps by a wonderful guidance to Rome, the mistress of the Nations —so that He placed in the chief or first city him who is first and chief, Peter. And as there he shone forth conspicuous by the purity of his teaching, so there does he rest, receiving a resting-place to the end of time, glorified by the shedding of his blood, granting to the See, which he himself has blessed, that through the promise of the Lord, it should never be over-

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come by the gates of hell, and should be the safe harbour and refuge for all who are tossed hither and thither upon the waves." [1]

Some two hundred and fifty years before the time of Pope Gelasius, St. Cyprian had written to his predecessor in the Holy See concerning certain Africans:

"They dare to set sail and carry a letter from schismatics and profane persons [not to the imperial city as such], but to the Chair of Peter and to the chief Church, whence the sacerdotal unity has sprung, and they do not consider that these are the Romans, whose faith was lauded by the praise of the Apostle, *and that to them change of faith can have no access.*"[2]

The learned Fr. Hartman Grisar sums this subject up in these words:

"Unquestionably the Roman Primacy rose more rapidly into notice owing to the See of Peter having been established in the very focus of Roman imperial power. At the same time it is entirely false to insinuate that the Bishops of Rome received their spiritual authority merely from this external circumstance of their See. They did not hold it from the State, nor was it

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[1] *Tractatus II. de damnatione nominum Petri et Acacii* c. 10.

[2] "Navigare audent, et ad Petri Cathedram atque ad Ecclesiam principalem, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est, a schismaticis et profanis litteras ferre, nec cogitâre eos esse Romanos . . . ad quos perfidia habere non possit accessum" (*Ep.* xii. 14, ad Cornelium Papam). With this passage we may compare the words of St. Jerome (*Apolog.* iii., *contra Rufin.*): "Scito Romanam fidem, Apostolicâ voce laudatam . . . non posse mutari."

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a result of the importance of the City, nor had they it in delegation from the other churches, who, in deference to the seat of empire, had acquiesced in the Roman bishops' claim to supreme power. How could even the most venerable traditions of a city have decided so many high-minded members of the Episcopacy —all jealous too of their independence—to submit to the dictation of a single bishop without the justice of his pretensions being made the subject of a general inquiry? Were such the case, we should have here the veriest riddle of history. . . . The natural element combined with the supernatural."[1]

The Popes have always claimed to teach as successors of Peter, whose authority came from the word of Christ.

Again and again, from the days of Clement the First to those of Pius the Tenth, every Pope has taught the Christian world authoritatively. The right of the Popes thus to teach has been continually and continuously based by them upon their succession from St. Peter, on whom Christ bestowed unique prerogatives. This was the claim advanced, for example, in the second century by Pope St. Callistus; in the third by Pope St. Stephen; in the fourth by Pope St. Julius and by Pope St. Siricius;[2] in the fifth by the Popes Saints Innocent, Celestine, Damasus and Leo.

[1] *History of Rome and the Popes of the Middle Ages*, p. 316.

[2] The Decretal letters of the first three centuries have perished, but a complete series, addressed to Bishops all over the world, begins with those of Pope Siricius. He writes as follows: "We bear the burdens of all who labour—or, rather, the blessed Apostle Peter bears them in us—who in all things, as we trust, protects and defends us, who are the heirs of his administration."

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That all the Popes have thus asserted their authority from the beginning of the fifth century up to our own times will, at the present day, be denied by none. Could the bishops of Rome have been contradicted by any appeal to past tradition (even a negative one), it is inconceivable that they should have succeeded. The Rationalist will perhaps suggest that after the words of Christ to Peter had once been recorded, it became certain that someone would rise to claim their sanction for his ecclesiastical position, and that, as a matter of fact, this has been done by the Bishops of Rome. But if such were truly the case—if the Papal claim had, for instance, originated, as some have imagined, in St. Leo the Great,[1] or in

Their claim to be vested with the authority of Peter never contradicted.

[1] This is the view of Dr. Gore. Yet, years before St. Leo succeeded to the Chair of Peter, his predecessor, Pope Siricius, had written as follows: "The aforesaid rule let all priests observe who do not wish to be plucked from the solidity of the Apostolic Rock upon which Christ built His whole Church . . . and to be deprived by the authority of the Apostolic See of the whole ecclesiastical dignity which they have used unworthily" (*Ep.* i. ad Him., *n.* 3, 11). Words stronger than these can hardly be suggested as expressing the authority of the Popes over the "whole Church" and thus over "all priests." When they were written, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Optatus, Jerome and Augustine were all living as priests in the Church of God. It is true that Dr. Gore writes that "in the person of Victor we have our first anticipation of the aggressive spirit, which is to be a distinguishing characteristic of the See of Rome in later ages" (p. 95); but a little later (p. 110) he expresses the opinion that "St. Leo

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St. Victor,[1] or in St. Clement,[2] or in any other Pope subsequent to St. Peter himself, that claim would have been at once detected as a novelty, and consequently would have been immediately repudiated by his contemporaries. If no Catholics had been found to protest, at any rate heretical adversaries of the Apostolic See (whose name in the early centuries was legion) would have been only too glad to urge that the Petrine authority vested in the Bishop of Rome was something new and, therefore, false. But, on the contrary, when strongly urged by St. Leo, it was, as we have seen, enthusiastically accepted by the great Council of Chalcedon.

Although the Papal Government (like every other authority the world has ever known) may in the early ages, very occasionally have been resisted,[3] and although appeals were on certain

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the Great has a claim to be called the father of the Papacy."

[1] A.D. 190. This is the view of the Huguenot Sabatier, who calls St. Victor's action "the birthday of the Papacy." Harnack, however, is of opinion that the issue of Pope Victor's "peremptory edict" shows that "the special prerogative of Rome to determine the conditions of the common unity (κοινὴ ἕνωσις) had been *already* an acknowledged and well-established fact" (see *History of Dogma*, ii. 3. *Excursus*, pp. 160-161).

[2] This seems to be the view of Dr. Lightfoot.

[3] Such resistance may sometimes be regarded, from the Catholic standpoint, as an act of virtue—for example, of freedom from human respect and of charity towards

occasions made to the Pope (as in the case of Apiarius), to observe the existing canon law with

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the imperfect. Thus, if in the second century St. Irenæus remonstrated with Pope St. Victor concerning his threatened excommunication of the Asiatics over the Paschal controversy, reminding him of the mildness under similar circumstances of his predecessors, "Anicetus and Pius, Hyginus with Telesphorus and Xystus," and begging him "not to cut off whole churches of God," it was in the sixteenth century that St. Philip Neri forbade Baronius to continue to hear the confessions of Pope Clement the Eighth, unless he should withdraw the excommunication of Henry of Navarre. Pope Victor possibly, Pope Clement certainly, heeded the remonstrance—no doubt to the great advantage of religion. The strongest representation against that which is conceived to be an imprudent exercise of authority is the very opposite to its denial. The former is an act of recognition, the other a repudiation, of that authority. A precedent for such remonstrance (clearly to be used only in an extreme case) may be found in Galatians ii. 11-14: where, however, it should be noted that in verse 11 κατὰ πρόσωπον ("to the face") does not mean "rudely," but "openly" (*cf.* ἔμπροσθεν πάντων, "before them all," verse 14). St. Paul, as an honest man, said that which he thought it his duty to say on a matter of grave moment for the salvation of souls, openly, even to St. Peter, when in a matter of discipline St. "Peter was to be blamed." St. Irenæus, St. Bernard on occasion, St. Philip Neri and other Saints have not hesitated, when necessity arose, to follow the example thus set by him who terms himself "the least of the Apostles." The late Dean Church writes as follows (*St. Anselm and William Rufus*, p. 176): "The notion of being independent of the See of Peter is one which was never found amongst the thoughts of a religious man. Even as a possibility it never occurred to an irreligious one, excepting as involving disobedience and rebellion . . . we would have people reflect . . . that there was a time when the authority of the Popes

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regard to the manner of its exercise, its legitimacy has never been denied, or even questioned, amongst Catholics through the whole course of ecclesiastical history. Never once, either within the Church or outside her boundaries, was it said to any Pope before the days of Wickliff and Huss:[1] "You are not that which you claim to be—the successor of Peter. You are nothing better than an impostor. You have not inherited the prerogatives of Peter. In fact, no special prerogatives were bestowed upon Peter at all, to be handed on to any successor."[2] Yet, if the

was no controverted dogma, and when it was as much a matter of course *even to those who opposed its exercise* as the primacy of Canterbury or the royal supremacy is with us."

[1] The Albigensians very probably may have said something of the sort, but they were Manichæans, not in any sense Christians. Wickliff in the fourteenth century identified the Pope with Antichrist. He is "vicarius principalis Satanæ, radix et caput Ecclesiæ malignantium," and so on. Huss revived the old Manichæan argument refuted by St. Augustine, and wrote: "Nemo vere gerit vicem Christi vel Petri, nisi sequatur eum in moribus." Wickliff was condemned, amongst other things, for saying: "Ecclesia Romana est synagoga Satanæ, nec Papa est proximus et immediatus vicarius Christi et Apostolorum"; Huss was condemned for asserting: "Petrus non est, nec fuit, caput Ecclesiæ Sanctæ Catholicæ" (*cf. Denifle, O.P., Luther u. Luthertum, II.*, 1909, and *Die Quellen des Luthertums*, chap. v.).

[2] The one possible exception to this statement may perhaps be suggested in the fact that Tertullian, after his lapse into the Montanist heresy, denied that the Pope of the day had received the keys (the power of forgiving sins) from Peter (*vide* p. 241, *infra*). But Tertullian never

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Papal claim were a new claim, some such protest would have been made, not once only, but again and again.

Such language as was constantly used in antiquity by local Councils, and also by the greatest Saints and Doctors of the Church, to the Chair of Peter, appealing for authoritative decisions on questions of faith, and for the condemnation of heretics and heresies in every part of the world, was never addressed to any other See in Christendom; but if the supreme authority of the Pope were merely of *ecclesiastical*, as distinct from *divine*, right, there would surely have arisen some question of transferring it elsewhere, since that which the Church has given as a matter of convenience, the Church can take away. Of any such suggestion there is not a trace to be found in ecclesiastical history.

The great Eastern Doctor, St. Maximus of Constantinople, writing A.D. 649 or 650, sums up the Catholic tradition on this subject:

> "For from the coming down of the Incarnate Word amongst us, all the churches of the world have possessed and held that greatest Church alone as *their base and foundation*, seeing that, according to the promise of Christ our Saviour, the gates of hell do never prevail against it, that it possesses the Keys of a right confession and faith in Him, that it opens the true and only

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suggested either that the Pope did not sit in the Chair of Peter or that his claim to forgive sins was anything new.

religion to such as approach it with piety, and that it shuts up and locks every heretical mouth."[1]

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Now, if all this is a mistaken explanation of the authority exercised by the Roman See—if the position of the Popes be due, in fact, not to "the promises of Christ our Saviour," but to pride and arrogance taking advantage of worldly opportunity, it is hard to understand how any Christian can believe that our Lord should have foreseen such misery as this, and should yet have deliberately, as it were, of set purpose, used words apt of their very nature to add fuel to the flames. If Councils and Saints have erred in their attitude to St. Peter's Chair, then, beyond a doubt, by Christ Himself have they been led astray.

The claims of the Holy See "in possession."

Here *is* the Papal power "in possession" to-day, international, venerable in age, conspicuous in all the annals of the Church, with its roots at the very beginning of Christian history, startling, arresting attention, hard to account for; and right at the back of it are the words of Christ, significant and astonishing. Dislike the Papacy though a man may; though he disbelieve in it, and attempt to explain away its origin in this manner or the other, yet, after all has been said, the hard fact remains that the Throne of the Fisherman justifies the extraordinary words of the Carpenter of

[1] *Op.* S. Max., ii. 72.

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They reach back to Christ and are based on His words.

Nazareth (which else are practically meaningless), and fulfils them before the eyes of all beholders.

Had Christ never said, *Tu es Petrus*, there would have been no See of Peter, no Sovereign Pontiff on earth at this hour. If, then,—let us again put the question, which still awaits its answer—if Christ be only a man like unto all other men, is it conceivable that He should have spoken this simple sentence and a few more phrases similar in import, and that so great a result should have emerged from so insignificant a cause, as must be any declaration which is of merely human origin?

If the words of Christ be the very words of God, no achievement can be too mighty for them to effect. If, on the other hand, they are nothing more than the idle phrases of an Eastern carpenter (however great a mystic), obviously they can create nothing.

Let one who hesitates go to Rome. There at least he will find it impossible to forget the Pope. Let him then ask the Holy Father—ask him if he will, in his historic home, the Apostle's shrine hard by—ask him to explain himself—who he is and whence his power.

"I am the successor of a fisherman," comes the quick reply—"but of a fisherman who had for a Lord the Incarnate God, whose feet once trod this earth. To the Fisherman, on

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whose throne I sit, his Lord made wonderful promises. Of these promises I am the heir."

Here we have an answer, explanatory of the Pope's position, giving full satisfaction to the mind, because it deals with and illuminates facts, and keeps clear of mere guesswork and hypothesis. Can as much be said of any other effort to account for the indestructibility and world-wide authority of St. Peter's See to-day?

The Word of Christ the Word of God.

St. Jerome, commenting on the words of Christ, "And I also say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church," writes as follows:

> "'And I also say to thee.' What is this that He says: 'And I also say to thee'? Because thou hast said to Me, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' I also say to thee, not with an idle word that produces no effect, but I say to thee (since for Me to have spoken is to have accomplished), that 'thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.'"[1]

The Chair of the Fisherman rests with safety on the Word of God. Through more than nineteen centuries of strife and struggle and persecution it could hardly have been supported on the passing word of man. The more the problem be considered from various points of view, the more are we driven back upon the conclusion that the supernatural life of the Catholic Church and the ecclesiastical rule of Blessed Peter,

[1] *In Evangel. Matt.* xvi. 18.

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Indestructibility of the Church founded by Christ.

ever "living and judging in his successors," bear a testimony, that may not lightly be contradicted, to the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Against that Church of His the storms, indeed, have seldom ceased to rage, yet they have always raged in vain. To no purpose round that Rock, upon which the hand of the Eternal has built a habitation and a resting-place for His own, have the rushing waters surged, except, haply, to wash away the sand that may have gathered here and there about its unshaken base. As Christ proclaimed, even so has it been accomplished. The gates of hell have not prevailed to overcome the structure created by His Word.

Still the sheepfold is fenced round safely. Still within this fold sheep and lambs are tended according to His all-wise provision. While others, who have parted from Peter's company, falter and explain—too often only to explain away—the words and deeds of Christ, here, where Peter reigns, the Godhead of his Lord is still confessed in all its amazing simplicity. Here the Father still reveals the Son.

It is at least a fact deserving consideration that in the Society which alone understands the "Thou art Peter" in its literal sense, the "Thou art the Christ" is proclaimed and understood with a clearness that is becoming

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Witness of Peter to Christ.

more and more dimmed in all the rest of Western Christendom by limitations and vague uncertainty.[1]

To sum up all, we who see before our eyes the accomplishment of the *Tu es Petrus*, are thereby strengthened, with Simon, son of John, to profess our belief in the *Tu es Christus.*

"Of a truth, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now we know that Thou hast the words of everlasting life. For the very works' sake we believe."

And, believing, we do well often to meditate upon the words that He spoke of old.

> "Everyone, therefore, that heareth these My words and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew,

[1] It is noteworthy that Mr. Gladstone wrote to Archdeacon Manning (January 26, 1851) as follows: ". . . the Popedom. I cannot at this moment dare to answer with a confident affirmative the question—a very solemn one: Ten, twenty, fifty years hence, will there be any other body in Western Christendom witnessing for fixed dogmatic truth?" (Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. I., p. 403). Evidently Mr. Gladstone had no apprehension lest (whatever might happen elsewhere) "the Popedom" should cease to witness to the very kernel of "fixed dogmatic truth"—the Divinity of our Lord. Whence, unless from the divine promises, comes the certainty of all, even hostile, observers, concerning the secular attitude of the Papacy, from St. Peter to Pius the Tenth, towards our Lord Jesus Christ?

and they beat upon the house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock."[1]

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Such a house is the indestructible Church of God, which the everlasting Wisdom has built on earth.

And of Christ to Peter.

The rain has fallen, and the floods have come, and the winds have blown. Those winds are blowing at this hour. Through the long ages they have not ceased for one single moment to blow and beat, as they will beat even to the end; but a ruin to the ground that house can never fall, for it has been founded upon a Rock. The Church's story proves that not at random did He build, nor in vain, who built upon the faith of His Apostle Peter. Only upon the words and deeds of Him, who built wisely, is it safe for us, who live now, to build the house of our salvation. Through His accomplished works we, who see those works verifying His words before our eyes, may learn both to believe in Him, and also "to hear and do," as He has commanded. The Papacy is the great fulfilment of His most fruitful promise.

If the words and acts of Christ do not prove that He conferred the Primacy upon St. Peter, we have a right to ask, What proof would be deemed sufficient for the purpose? This question should surely be faced and answered by the Christian who finds himself alienated from the consequences of that Primacy in the Church.

[1] Matt. vii. 24, 25.

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Otherwise it is only too possible that he may find in the end that (no doubt quite unconsciously, but to his own great detriment), he has allowed inveterate prejudice to close his eyes to the weight of evidence and the force of visible facts. It is hard to think that any man can suggest words more effective for the purpose of establishing what are sometimes known as "the Roman claims" than are those words which, one after another, fell from the lips of Christ. It is difficult to imagine any proof of St. Peter's unique position and office, on which the Roman claims repose, more striking and complete than are those proofs, which we find enshrined in the holy Gospels.

And yet again of Peter's See to Christ, the everlasting Son of God.

THE promises of Christ constitute the great credentials of the Papacy.

The Papacy, in its turn, by the verification of the *Tu es Petrus*—in the stability of the Church founded of old on the fisherman-disciple—has become a standing proof of the divine power of that fisherman's Lord and Master.

Peter still lives to bear, in the midst of a world of unbelief, his witness to the Divinity of Christ. In every age, in every clime, unwearied, unfaltering, as of old, he gives the world, for all the world to hear, the testimony of his faith, that knows not death.

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Tu es Christus, Filius Dei Vivi. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Thus he ever cries aloud. *Tu es Petrus* is the answer of the Christ. Awestruck, we listen to the word of God, and, seeing that word fulfilled, gladly we, too, believe.

"Prorsus totum mundum dimisit Petrus, et totum mundum Petrus accepit."[1]

Peter gave up the whole world—he gave up his fishing-nets—and received—the whole world in charge.

And from whom did this fisherman receive the world? From a carpenter's reputed son!

"For Me to have spoken is to have accomplished."

[1] S. August., *Enarratio in Psalmum* ciii.

IV

THE "SACRAMENTS OF THE DEAD" BEAR WITNESS TO THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

A VISIBLE Church must have not only a visible head, but also visible religious rites. The sense of fitness and convenience has caused these generally to be celebrated in some public place set apart for the purpose. For any person who is in the habit of visiting such a sacred edifice dedicated to Catholic worship, few sights will be more familiar than now the administration of Baptism, and now a penitent confessing his sins to a priest. The font is at the entrance, confessionals usually flank the sides, of every house of God, which is also a true home for the weary spirits of the sinful children of men.

Belief in Baptism,

Yet, if we reflect, it will seem strange in itself, and a matter worthy of investigation, that fathers and mothers of this twentieth century should think it worth their while to bring young and, it may be, delicate children, through all weathers, to an ofttimes cold and unwarmed building that those infants may have water poured over their heads during the course of a mystic rite of ceremonial ablution. Does it not

seem to savour of the East rather than of the West, and to be in tune with some sacred river of the Palestine of the past rather than with the rushing life of the London or Paris of to-day? Curious indeed must Baptism appear to the stranger within the Christian gates. Still more unexpected and contrary to the instincts of human nature is it that men of the world, of position and of affairs, should without demur humble themselves on their knees to tell their secret sins in the confessional, to one who is a sinner like themselves—sins that otherwise could never be known or even suspected.

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And in Confession,

We will first examine the explanation given by the Catholic Church of these phenomena, whereby she shows in practice that not to no purpose is belief in the forgiveness of sins professed in the most ancient of her creeds.

the outcome of belief in the forgiveness of sins.

For she teaches that God has bequeathed to man two Mysteries or Sacraments, Baptism and Penance by name, both called "Sacraments of the Dead," inasmuch as they both were instituted primarily, in order to raise the soul from the sleep of death and to bestow upon the recipient a share in the divine life of Jesus Christ the Lifegiver.

If we consider the ever-present fact of Christian Baptism, it will well repay any trouble that we may take in the investigation, for it is a survival from the past—as Christians believe, a survival

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that will never disappear from the earth—which carries us back to the very days of Christ Himself.

Various pagan religions have had their ceremonial ablutions, and the Talmud of Babylon mentions a baptism of Jewish proselytes.[1]

Further, we read that John, known as the Baptist, immersed or baptized his disciples in the Jordan to signify the repentance by which the whole man was to be justified. But no real comparison is possible between the temporary and purely local baptisms of individuals amongst the Jews, still less between the ablutions sporadically prevalent amongst sun and animal worshippers—and the Baptism instituted by Christ. An ancient Father writes:

> "There are baptisms of the heathen, but they are not Baptisms. Ablutions they are; Baptisms they cannot be. The body is washed, sin is not remitted—indeed, by such a washing sin is contracted. Again, there were baptisms amongst the Jews, some unnecessary, others in figure. Now, the figure itself is of advantage to us, inasmuch as it is the herald proclaiming the truth."[2]

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[1] *Cf.* Döllinger, *First Ages of the Church*, p. 318.

[2] *De Sacramentis*, lib. ii., cap. i. 2 (inter opera S. Ambrosii): "Sunt baptismata gentium, sed non sunt Baptismata—Lavacra sunt, Baptismata esse non possunt. Caro lavatur, non culpa diluitur, imo in illo lavacro contrahitur. Erant autem baptismata Judæorum, alia superflua, alia in figurâ, et figura ipsa nobis proficit, quia veritatis est nuntia." Amongst these "baptisms of the

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Christian Baptism has already been administered for close on two thousand years. It is to endure for all time, and is world-wide in its use. This Baptism, unlike the baptisms to be found in Persia or Egypt, is no empty ceremony. To it marvellous, invisible, supernatural effects are ascribed by the Catholic Church. St. Optatus wrote long ago that Baptism bestows grace.[1] He proceeds to ask:

> "Who amongst the Faithful is unaware that the one Baptism (singulare Baptisma) gives life to the virtues, deals death to the vices, confers the birth of immortality, prepares the way to the kingdom of heaven, provides a harbour for innocence, and is the shipwreck of sins."[2]

All this Catholics honestly believe to-day. Catholics believe (and in this matter the great majority of Christians out of communion with the Holy See hold the same faith) that by Baptism comes the remission of sins, and that through Baptism a new life is given to the soul.

Between two ploughed fields, one of which has been recently sown with seed, and the other remains unsown, there is no difference discernible by the naked eye. Yet the differ-

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heathen," which "are not and cannot be Baptisms, though they are ablutions," no doubt this writer would place the initiatory baptism of the votaries of Isis or Mithra.

[1] "Baptisma Christianorum, Trinitate confectum, confert gratiam" (*De Schismat. Donatist.*, V. i. 80).

[2] *Ibid.*, 81.

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ence is vast indeed. The one is already rich with the promise of the golden harvest that is to come—"first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear"[1]—whilst the other has no hope of any usefulness, unless in it also the grain be scattered. Of these two fields the second, without the hidden seed, shall be barren when the ingathering time comes round; the first will yield the crop on which depends the material life of man, that he may not die.

This analogy from Nature may serve to prepare the mind for the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

There may be no difference, visible to the senses, between two children; but if one has received Christian Baptism and the other is still unbaptized, to the first has already been granted incorporation in the Body of the Son of God, to which his fellow must remain a stranger, unless he, too, "in the laver of regeneration[2] be buried with Christ"[3] in the font. Even as the seed is cast into the earth by the hand of the sower, there to be hidden, and then to spring up, so too Christ, who is called the "Corn of the Elect,"[4] is planted in the soul by

[1] Mark iv. 28.
[2] Titus iii. 5. (*Cf.* 1 Peter iii. 21.)
[3] *Cf.* Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.
[4] *Cf.* Zach. ix. 17. Quid enim bonum Dei est, et quid pulchrum Ejus, nisi frumentum electorum et vinum germinans virgines?

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Baptism,[1] in order that, in the years to come, He may feed that soul with the true Bread which cometh down from heaven, and may thus preserve and bring to ripe perfection the spiritual life that otherwise would decay and perish.[2]

"I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me"[3] was the mysterious saying of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

It is not germane to our present purpose to discuss the truth of this belief. It is the creed, not merely of the Catholic Church, but also of all the Churches of the East which have separated themselves from Catholic unity. It is the doctrine of the Wesleyan prayer-book as of the Anglican.

But it is strictly relevant to our inquiry to ask ourselves whence has come this faith —this trust reposed so confidently in the sacramental system, of which Baptism is the gate,—whence the hope that inspires men and women all over the world carefully to bring their children to the initial Sacrament of Christianity, heedless of the taunt that the pouring of a little material water cannot possibly advantage their immaterial souls?

What is the source of this tremendous value attached to the act of a moment? The water flows. The mystic words are spoken. The

[1] *Cf.* 1 John iii. 9. Σπέρμα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει.
[2] *Cf.* John vi. 50, 54. [3] Gal. ii. 20.

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"form" determines the "matter" for the high purpose of the Sacrament. Straightway the child of earth becomes the child of heaven. Unseen operations of divine grace effect the purposes of God. In this faith, we see the motive which inspires Christian parents all the world over. On what grounds do men believe such mysteries as these?

The Catholic answer is given without hesitation or doubt.

The words of Christ, and the words of Christ alone, suffice to work this miracle of belief. It is recorded of Him that He said to His first disciples:

Faith in Baptism springs from the words of Christ.

> "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, teach all nations; baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; and behold I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the world."[1]

And again to Nicodemus:

> "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18-20. Certain writers have denied the authenticity of this passage, and have even stated (mainly in consequence of its loose quotation by Eusebius) that it is a post-Nicene interpolation. But it is difficult to imagine that any "critic" will have the hardihood to deny that Christian Baptism owes its existence to Christ. And this is the main point of my argument.

man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."[1]

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These words have been interpreted of Baptism from the very commencement. St. Peter, in his first General Epistle (iii. 21) already speaks of Baptism as the antitype (*ἀντίτυπον*), of which "in the days of Noe, the salvation by water" (*διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος*) had been the type.

Be this belief true or false, it depends on faith in the word of Christ, on faith, reposed continuously from the days of Peter to our own, in Him whom God is believed to have "sent"[2] —a faith not merely stronger, but of a different kind from that yielded to any other teacher or prophet during the world's long history. Baptism "for the remission of sins"[3] is a standing monument to the power of Christ. He has created this faith as could no man, save the one Son of Man, who is also the Son of the living God.

And a tribute to His Divine power.

Had Socrates, or any other philosopher, ordered that his disciples should baptize their followers "for the remission of their sins," would there in all the centuries have been found one to believe or obey his word? Naaman the

[1] John iii. 5, 6. [2] John vi. 29.
[3] *Cf.* Acts ii. 38.

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Syrian refused to hearken to Eliseus the Prophet concerning the waters of Israel. But one far greater than Eliseus, greater far than Elias, the master of Eliseus, has visited His people. He who, transfigured on Mount Tabor, held converse with Moses and Elias, alone amongst men might thus prevail. He alone is the author of that faith which, transforming the persecutor of yesterday, should make him proud to proclaim his belief in the "one Baptism" of Christianity.[1] Law and Prophets have been fulfilled. Types and figures have passed away. Baptism—the divine reality—remains secure, unshaken in its testimony to the creative power of Christ.

No second Baptism possible.

"I believe in *one* Baptism for the forgiveness of sins."

Once only may Baptism be administered to the same person. Under no circumstances can there be a second, valid Baptism. Such has been the teaching of Christianity, unbroken in its continuity from the beginning. Therefore for a second or a third forgiveness there must be another Sacrament.

But there is the Sacrament of Penance.

Now, the Catholic Church has been conscious from the commencement of her history that another Mystery has, in fact, been entrusted to her keeping, for the remission of post-baptismal sin—a second "Sacrament of the Dead."

[1] Ephes. iv. 5.

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Before the opening of the third century, we find St. Clement of Alexandria distinguishing two kinds of penance which admit of strict comparison one with the other—the first, which is Baptism; the other, which is for sins committed after Baptism.[1] This second Mystery of God's pardon is commonly called "Confession."

The Church herself terms it "the Sacrament of Penance."

HERE, beyond a question, is one of the most striking features of Catholicism. Wherever the name of Catholic is known, there we may observe men and women, under no compulsion save that derived from what they deem a moral obligation, confessing their sins in the sure hope that, if they be truly repentant, those sins shall be forgiven them through the words of priestly absolution, as certainly as all the offences of a lifetime are washed away by the flowing of the sacramental water, when Baptism is received by an adult at the opening of his Christian life.

Sins after Baptism have always, from the days of St. Paul to our own, been judged to be indefinitely more heinous than are those that may be committed by one not yet incorporated into the mystical Body of Christ.

[1] *Cf.* Stromat., ii. 13, 56, and v. 14, 97.

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On the principles of the New Testament, a Sacrament is far more necessary for the forgiveness of the transgressions of the Christian, whose members are declared by the Apostle to be the very members of the Lord Himself, than for the remission of the much less grievous offences of the pagan. Belief in the remission of post-baptismal sins carries with it belief in the Sacrament of reconciliation, even as belief in the remission of sins committed before Baptism involves belief in the Sacrament of regeneration. Consequently, we find throughout Catholic Christendom that men, who practise their religion, without exception go to Confession, and, moreover, that they do so without question and, for the most part, without reluctance. Here, surely, we have come across a phenomenon which demands for its explanation a sufficing cause—a cause that may be at once its spring and measure.

It may conceivably be urged by the Agnostic that Baptism is a rite, and that religious ritual, whether true or false, rational or irrational, is a thing historically known to be tenacious; but this cannot be said of the Sacrament of Penance, which is no longer a *public* rite (although it is still ordinarily administered in public), for in this Mystery the purely ceremonial side is so slight as to be of no practical significance. Confession is concerned mainly with the secret

dispositions of the soul—with sorrow for sin, purpose of amendment of life, faith in our Lord, hope in His mercies, love for His infinite perfections—manifested externally, it is true, but in the strictest privacy, through the definite revelation to man of specific offences against God.

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Permanence of Sacrament of Penance has a character of unexpectedness.

The Sacrament of Penance has about it a character of unexpectedness, and even of strangeness, which often excites instinctive revolt in the non-Catholic, and which must make its perpetual continuation, notwithstanding all opposition, most striking to the onlooker. So proud, so reticent are men in all that concerns their inner life, so prone are we to make excuses for our failings, that any desire for confession, which may sometimes exist, is quite exceptional and is far less strong—at least in the normal man—than the repugnance to such a stripping away, as confession necessarily involves, of the coverings that shroud the dark places of the conscience.

For Confession is repugnant to the instincts of human nature.

The Reformers rejected the Sacrament of Penance as an intolerable yoke. Men who had not been able to live as fervent Catholics, discovered after the abolition of Confession, that it was remarkably easy to be thoroughly satisfactory Protestants. The indifferent and the sinful Christians of the sixteenth century must have found it pleasant enough to give ear to the new

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teachers, who assured them that it was no longer needful to confess to man as of old—that confession to God alone would suffice.

But in the Catholic Church confession to a priest has persisted; and to-day, in spite of all the strife of tongues engendered by the denials of the Reformation, we still find offences the most terrible, the most secret, the most shameful, confessed, as of yore, by men of all ages and of every condition in life. To this fact there is no parallel in human experience.

How, then, are we to account for this strange spectacle? Who can easily believe that all this hope of pardon, leading to such sacrifice—it may be to such violence to self—is due to auto-suggestion or to some sickly delusion? Dare a Christian think that after this manner the Almighty will allow those to be deceived who trust with simplicity in the words and promises of Christ?

Therefore it is a witness to the Divine authority of Christ, even more striking than Baptism.

And will not a fair-minded Agnostic admit, if he allows himself to face the facts, that it is but reasonable, but consonant with our experience in other regions of thought and action, to seek a more adequate cause than mere hysteria for so wide and persistent a phenomenon? Such a cause is to be found in the simple explanation given by the Catholic Church. She declares that all is the doing, "the work" of Christ, her Lord, and points

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to His words—easy, if words ever have been easy, of understanding—which He spoke to His Apostles during the great forty days between His resurrection and ascension:

The words of Christ.

"Peace be to you. Even as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

And having said this, and having "breathed upon them," He continued thus:

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you remit, they are remitted (*ἀφίενται αὐτοῖς*—*i.e.*, become remitted, or forgiven) unto them; and whose sins you retain, they have been retained" (*κεκράτηνται*—*i.e.*, continue to be retained before God).[1]

The Sacrament of Penance, like Baptism, to last as long as it should be needed.

IT does not pertain to our present purpose to prove by direct argument the divine institution of the Sacrament of Penance.

But, should it be objected by any that no saying of our Lord is recorded in the Gospels which can be quoted to establish the fact that this power of the forgiveness of sins was bestowed, not only upon the Apostles, but also upon those who should come after them, we may perhaps be allowed to digress for a moment, and to observe that if this objection be of any force as against the giving of Absolution in the Catholic Church, the same argument can be urged with equal validity and effect against the

[1] John xx. 23.

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present-day use of Baptism throughout Christendom, or against the present custom of listening to sermons. So far as the letter of Scripture goes, to the Apostles only was given the authorization to baptize and to preach the Gospel. But, since Baptism would always be necessary, and (in its degree) preaching also, it is freely conceded by Christians generally that the commission to baptize and to preach was to last until the consummation of all things earthly — that it was bestowed upon the Apostles not in their private, but in their official, capacity. Will it, then, be denied that the power to forgive sins committed after Baptism is at least as necessary as Baptism or sermons? Where there is the need, there God provides the remedy. Thus the authority to absolve, like the authority to baptize, was to endure as long as it should be required—as long, that is, as there should be post-baptismal sin. This, however, is a consideration by the way; it does not concern, excepting incidentally, our main contention.

The Sacrament of Penance in possession.

It belongs rather to the scope of our argument to urge that whatever else may be in dispute, at any rate, the fact of the systematic administration of the Sacrament of Penance throughout the world at the present moment is notorious to all observers, and, consequently, has to be accounted for in some fashion or

other; moreover, that the Catholic solution of the problem is alone capable of dealing with all the facts and conditions of the case.

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Confession to a priest is here. It is, as the lawyers would phrase it, "in possession," and can be traced back age by age, until we find the record of the words of Christ, creative both of this faith in absolution and of the practice of self-accusation to another man, which is necessary to receive judicial remission of sins,—for, obviously, sins that remain unknown cannot be remitted by a spiritual judge. "Whose sins you remit, they are remitted unto them." Trusting in this solemn declaration of Christ, and in order to obtain the divine forgiveness thus unequivocally promised, countless men and women in every land have, with natural pain and shrinking, yet most willingly and even gladly, confessed their sins to the priest of God.

If Christ instituted this Sacrament, He is God.

Hence, once again, it is clear that, if it be Jesus Christ who has succeeded in inducing millions upon millions in every age to humble themselves by the confession of their sins to their fellowman, solely in order to obtain His grace and pardon with all security,—then, He is God, for none but God could have effected this wonder of humility and have brought men to do such violence to their own pride, through simple faith in His Word. Thus is Wisdom justified of her children.

We read in each of the Synoptic Gospels

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that after our Lord had said to the man sick of the palsy

> "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee,"

some of the scribes thought in their hearts:

The claim of Christ upon earth to forgive sins.

> "Why does this man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only?"
>
> "But Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil things in your hearts? Which is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk. But that you may know that *the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins* (He said to the sick of the palsy), I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, marvelled [St. Luke has here ἔκστασις ἔλαβεν ἅπαντας, all were out of themselves—were overcome with wonder] and glorified God, *who was giving* (τὸν δόντα) *such power unto men.*"[1]

He is recorded to have given this power to His Apostles.

We read, further, that the Son of Man conferred upon other men this same power of forgiving sins with divine authority.

[1] Matt. ix. 2-8; Mark ii. 5-10; Luke v. 24.

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"Even as the Father hath sent Me, so also send I you. Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them."

Consequently the Catholic Church, also, "glorifies God, who has given such power unto men," and thankfully, freely uses this Mystery of God's pardon, which she believes to be one of the most merciful of all the merciful works of her loving Lord.

If we are told that no man can forgive sins but God only, we call to mind that an objection of this character is nothing more formidable than the antiquated assertion of the scribes, which was rebuked and confuted (even by miracle) by Christ Himself. When, therefore, we find ourselves invited to regard the Sacrament of Penance as the work not of God but of ambitious ecclesiastics, we may answer without hesitation that this is tantamount to imagining that all the Christian world went to bed one night not going to Confession, only to awake the next morning with the conviction that it was required of them by their unseen Judge humbly and fully to acknowledge their secret sins to His priest on earth, but that of this extraordinary change of faith there remains no record. Surely to render credence to such a theory is to run counter to all experience and to all the known facts which govern human nature. Revolutions of this character are not successfully effected,

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Protest against Confession first made at the Reformation.

without observation, in less than four and twenty hours.

It is admitted that, in the case of any who should fall into post-baptismal mortal sin, the obligation of receiving the Sacrament of Penance (whenever that reception might be possible) had been taught authoritatively throughout the Christian world for long ages before the time of the Reformation. Suddenly it was asserted either that confession to a priest was an evil thing, or, at any rate, that it was unnecessary—optional. There is a chasm between a "necessary" and a "voluntary" (or "unnecessary") confession, which cannot be bridged over by graduations and degrees. If up to any given point of time Confession had been regarded as unnecessary, there must have been a definite moment when, in the case of post-Baptismal mortal sins, it commenced to be considered a necessary duty—of strict, binding force upon the Christian conscience. When was this moment? Why did not the Faithful cry out against this tyranny? Why is it that we nowhere read of schismatics standing up for the ancient freedom? How comes it that there is no trace in any historical document of any commotion such as would certainly have been produced by a change in religious belief and practice of this far-reaching nature?

According to Catholic writers, the Church

has grown more and more lenient in her discipline as the fervour of primitive times relaxed, as the world has come into her fold, as her children have grown in numbers, as modern circumstances have altered their lives. Is not this in accordance with both the facts of history and with what we know of human nature? If, according to the contrary opinion, the Sacrament of Penance was introduced at some comparatively late age in the history of Catholicism, it would follow that the Church has been gradually growing more and more strict, enforcing new obligations on unresisting, uncomplaining slaves. Is this view tenable? Is it historical? Is it credible? Is it even possible?

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The Catholic Church has gradually become, not more, but less, strict in her discipline.

In the middle of the last century an attempt was made to introduce the practice of Confession as a recognized feature of the devotional life of members of the Church of England, but it is well known that great disturbance of minds and spirits was the immediate result, and that the determined effort has met—at least, so far—with but limited success. Men said (and say still) in Anglicanism: "We have no such custom, nor had our fathers before us." Now, human beings have not been in past ages constitutionally unlike that which they are to-day. In like manner, our fathers, too, in the Catholic Church would doubtless have protested, in any period of her history, had confession of their sins to a priest, until then

Had the obligation of Confession been suddenly taught, there must have been a protest at the time.

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unknown, been suddenly enforced upon them as the divinely appointed condition of forgiveness. Nor is it to be doubted that the sacerdotal order would have objected to any such innovation at least as strongly as lay folk, for not only does the heavy burden of the administration of this sacrament devolve upon priests, but also priests, as well as laymen themselves, go to Confession. All, then, clergy and laity, would have cried with one accord: "Away with it, it is an intolerable yoke! who can bear it?" But of such a protest there is not a trace in the pages of history.

On the contrary, there is no sign whatever that, until the Lutheran revolt (the date of which, of course, can be fixed with precise accuracy), sacramental Confession had ever been looked upon in any other light than as a means of obtaining forgiveness of sins, which should be thankfully welcomed by all Christian people—a yoke, indeed, but the yoke of Him who assures us that His yoke is easy and His burden light. When at last the rebellion did come, it came sixteen centuries too late for its justification. The Sacrament of Penance already occupied its own place in the kingdom of God, with long ages of prescription behind it, and for its starting-point those mighty words, piercing with their light the clouds that lay dark and heavy over the sin-laden earth: "Even as the Father hath sent Me, so I also send you;

whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven unto them."

It is difficult to understand how a reverent Protestant, who believes in the Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth and also in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, can maintain that our Lord used such words as these, knowing that they would in all future ages be understood in their literal sense, and yet that He meant by them nothing very particular—nothing, at least, of which the significance can, without doing them violence, be brought home to those poor and unlettered men, to whom it was His will that His Gospel should be preached from the very housetops.

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Our Lord's words prove that He gave the power of Absolution to His Church,

When a simple Christian, conscious of the weight of sin, is told that by "whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven unto them," it is meant that sins against God may be forgiven through the absolution of a spiritual judge who, for this purpose, is the divine representative, even as sentence of acquittal is passed in the case of crimes against the State by secular tribunals,—or, more exactly, as the king's pardon is proclaimed through a recognized official—he will at least understand you. The case is quite otherwise for the plain, straightforward man who may strive to gather the meaning of these words of Christ,—from Protestant commentaries. After all sophistical cobwebs have

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been brushed on one side, divine words remain, precise and unambiguous, in their unadorned simplicity.

When our Lord spoke of the power that He was bestowing upon men for the forgiveness of the sins of their fellows, He—if in truth He is God—foresaw the confessional at work in His Church through the centuries of time, with all the consequences which the confessional entails.

If this unique spiritual tribunal be opposed to the mind and will of Christ, clearly it is but a fraudulent imposture, cheating its victims with a false tale, holding out a lying promise of forgiveness for their sins. What Christian can bring Himself to believe that such an institution would have been allowed by the Everlasting Truth to claim for itself, with at least some considerable amount of plausibility, the warrant and sanction of His own promise? For it cannot be denied by any Christian that to those men whom He sent forth to "all nations" in His Name, He said expressly: "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven unto them."

And illustrate the continuous use of the Sacrament of Penance.

To the Rationalist of any school, these words of Christ, taken by themselves, would present no difficulty had they not, in fact, been illustrated by the practice of the Sacrament of Penance over such a vast tract of territory and expanse of time. Were it not for the

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notorious use of Confession amongst both Catholics and many other believers in Christ, in every age, such an utterance might be waived on one side as the vain claim of an egoist to bestow on others judiciary power which He did not Himself possess; or it might even be boldly declared on *a priori* grounds, to be spurious, and consequently ignored as of no account. As things stand, however, such a course is plainly impossible. Every confessional open and visible throughout the world to-day is an "historical monument" of the past, as well as a phenomenon of the present, that must be accounted for by all those non-Catholic investigators and critics who are not content merely to take refuge in an unworthy silence, equivalent to an acknowledgment of defeat. It is certain that an interpolation can neither have created nor sustained the world-wide, age-long custom of confession to a priest. An interpolation will not bear the weight of the Sacrament of Penance.[1] Until adequately explained,

[1] It is important carefully to distinguish between "Textual Criticism" and the so-called "Higher Criticism." Of the former, the Catholic need have no fear, but with the "Higher Critic," who considers himself free to eliminate from his documents whole passages at will, purely on *a priori* and arbitrary grounds, because they do not fit in with his preconceived hypotheses, it is impossible to conduct any satisfactory discussion. "There is no Scriptural authority for the Primacy of Peter." "But Christ said, *Tu es Petrus*." "Oh, that is an interpolation. '*Is fecit, cui prodest. . . .*'" "How do you know

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this Sacrament stands as a living commentary on the words of Christ, and a testimony to His divine power which refuses to be denied.

Explanation of Harnack

According to his wont, Professor Harnack leaps into the gap ready with an explanation all cut and dried and suitable for his purpose. It may be worth our while to consider what he has to tell us on the subject:

> "Since, however" (he writes),[1] "the Occidental Church did not, like the Oriental, relinquish the administration of law and questions of morality entirely to the State, but rather interposed to discipline and punish, there was developed, parallel to the State institution of law, the Church institution of penance. The detailed development of this institution was a consequence of the transfer and application of penance without the cloisters to the secular clergy and to the laity, and it originated with the Irish-Scottish—*i.e.*, with the Anglo-Saxon Church. But, through the fear of the punishment of sin, of hell, and purgatory, the laity favoured the practice and established the influence of the Church in its entire range, even

that it is an interpolation?" "Because, as I have already told you, there is no Scriptural authority for the Primacy of Peter." When one side will argue in a vicious circle, argument necessarily soon comes to an end (*cf.* p. 112, note, *supra*). However, such a mode of argument can hardly damage the cause of the Faith. The one danger is lest individual believers should lose their nerve in the presence of bombast and pretence. It is evident that if the methods of the "Higher Critics" were applied to other fields of investigation, all historical knowledge would speedily vanish from the earth.

[1] *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, p. 403.

over private life itself. A certain deepening of the conception of sin was the consequence," etc.

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The witchery of such writing may too easily cast its spell upon our minds, so that in our bewilderment we may be almost tempted for the moment to imagine that the learned German professor was present when everything happened just as he has described it, and that we were ourselves by his side at the time, seeing with his eyes and hearing with his ears.

But when we come to consider more closely and analyze with some care that which is thus confidently and magisterially asserted, the whole imposing fabric is at once dissipated, as though it were in truth no more than a cloud of thin mist, and is dissolved into a vapour of baseless affirmations. Regarded separately, these statements crumble into dust when tested by the simple touchstone of prosaic inquiry as to the possibility of any one of them, so that nothing remain but unverifiable and most improbable hypotheses. Let us descend from the *must have been* to what actually *was*, from the poetry of fancy and imagination to the hard domain of facts, and we shall ask in vain for an answer to the following questions:

confuted by facts.

1. If the Sacrament of Penance was developed, as we are thus assured, by "the Occidental Church" in a way that would not have been possible to the "Oriental," how comes it that,

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ever since anything can be historically traced in the matter, confessions of sin have been heard not only in the West but also in the East ?[1]

2. There is not a scrap of real evidence for the theory that the Sacrament of Penance was "transferred and applied *without* the cloisters to the secular clergy and the laity," though no doubt in England and Ireland (where the discipline of *public* Confession was never established), the monks were in early days the

[1] No religious body in the East is without the regular use of Confession, excepting only the Nestorians in Persia. The Nestorian religious book called the *Margarita* (or Pearl), written in 1298, refers to the habitual use of the Sacrament of Penance, which it expressly recognizes as one of the Seven Mysteries (or Sacraments). But on the arrival of the Portuguese at the coast of Malabar in 1498, they found that Confession had disappeared in practice; and the schismatic Monophysite Armenians have at the present time a saying that "the Nestorian goes to Communion as the ass goes to hay," which of itself is sufficiently expressive, and needs no words of explanation. When, however, Nestorians are reconciled to the Holy See and become Uniats (Catholics), they never make the slightest difficulty about Confession, which they still recognize as a duty, though a duty that has fallen into abeyance.

Therefore the apparent exception of the Nestorians is no real exception to the universal statement that the ancient Churches of the East, even those at present out of communion with the Holy See, bear unbroken witness to the use of the Sacrament of Penance from the beginning, and thus reach back to the very origins of their Christianity, dimmed for us through lapse of time. It may be of interest to note that there are now in Persia about 2,000 Uniats, 30,000 Nestorians, and 3,000 Armenians (Monophysite schismatics).

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ordinary confessors of the faithful. This was inevitable before the regular establishment of the parochial system.

3. How does Professor Harnack know that through fear of punishment of sin in the next world "the laity favoured the practice of Confession"?

There is not a grain of evidence adducible for the statement that any Catholic layman ever objected to the practice of Confession before the time of Protestantism,[1] nor is there a shred of support forthcoming from any source for the confident assertion that it was sorrow for sin, arising from the fear of punishment, rather than from regret for having offended God, that brought our ancestors to Confession.

4. If "the detailed development of this institution" originated with the "Irish-Scottish—*i.e.*, with the Anglo-Saxon [and Celtic] Church," how comes it that men went to Confession in remote countries like Hungary, and Bohemia,

[1] The only exception to this statement is afforded by the fact that Alcuin (*Ep.* cxii.) states that amongst the Goths of Languedoc "neminem ex laicis suam velle confessionem sacerdotibus dare, quos a Deo Christo cum sanctis apostolis solvendi ligandique accepisse potestatem credimus." Therefore the Fathers of the Council of Châlons (A.D. 813) repudiated the opinion "of some, who said that we should confess to God alone." Such an opinion was isolated, and manifestly new, anticipating the Reformation. As discounting its importance, we must remember that the Goths were the heirs not of the Christian, but of the Arian tradition.

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and Poland, and the Basque Provinces of Spain, and on the steppes of Siberia, and in far-away Asiatic villages, before their inhabitants could have possibly come under the influence of these British Isles, of which in many cases they had never even heard?[1] How comes it that, amongst many others who might be quoted, Saints and Doctors of the Church such as St. John Chrysostom at Byzantium, or St. Augustine in Africa, or St. Basil in the East, *assume* this doctrine of priestly Absolution through power given by our Lord, and the consequent practice of Confession long before England, Ireland, or Scotland had been converted to Christ?

[1] Directly we consider the matter, we see that it is obviously futile to suggest that the Sacrament of Penance was carried by Irish monks to the East, whither they never travelled. But it is of considerable interest to observe how amongst the Gaels, as elsewhere throughout Christendom, we find confession to a priest in use from the very beginning of their conversion to the Faith. This remains the case in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, and in Brittany to the present time, as it was also amongst the Catholic Welsh up to the Reformation. Everywhere we meet the same phenomenon, and find people not only going regularly to Confession, but also declaring that they had received this custom from their first Apostles and teachers. To give one example out of many that might be cited, we read in Adamnan's *Life of St. Columbkille* (I. 30) that Feachnan once went to Iona from Ireland to make his confession to the Saint, at whose hands he received Absolution. In Gaelic a confessor was known as *Anam-chara*, or soul-friend, and there is an old Gaelic proverb which informs us that "as a body without a head, so is a man without a confessor" (see *The Early Scottish Church*, by Dom Columba Edmonds, p. 278).

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Testimony of St. Cyprian.

THUS, for example, we find St. Cyprian writing in the third century:

> "I beseech you, most dear brethren, let each confess his sin, whilst he that has sinned is yet amongst the living, whilst his confession can be admitted, whilst the satisfaction and the remission made through the priests are pleasing before the Lord."[1]

It may be noted that in the preceding chapter (xxviii.) of the same treatise the Saint had spoken of the confession of *venial* sins as strictly voluntary, but as much to be praised.

Of St. John Chrysostom.

In the next century St. John Chrysostom, when discoursing on the dignity and supernatural powers of the Christian priesthood, writes as follows:

> "For what power did He give but that which is wholly heavenly? 'Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. . . .' If a man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, unless he be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, and if he who does not eat of the Flesh of the Lord and drink His Blood is deprived of life eternal, whilst all these things are accomplished through no one else, but only through the consecrated (ἁγίων) hands of the priest, how without them shall any be able either to avoid the fire of hell, or to lay hold upon the crowns that are laid up? . . . The Jewish priests had power only to cleanse—nay, by no means to cleanse, but only *to declare cleansed*—the leprosy of the body, and yet you know how sought after

[1] *De Lapsis*, xxix.

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was the office of their priesthood. But these [Christian priests] have received power not to declare cleansed, but *completely to cleanse* (ἀπαλλάττειν παντελῶς) not the leprosy of the body, but the uncleanness of the soul. For they [priests] have power not only to forgive sins when they regenerate us [by Baptism] but also to forgive sins committed after Baptism."[1]

Of St. Basil.

And St. Basil the Great lays it down expressly:

"It is necessary to confess our sins to those who have been entrusted with the dispensation of the mysteries of God."[2]

Of St. Augustine.

So also St. Augustine urges the clergy not to flee in times of persecution, because their presence will then be urgently required for "the administration (*confectionem*) of the Sacraments."

"If the ministers are wanting, what ruin will come on those who leave this life unregenerate" (*i.e.*, unbaptized) "or bound" (*i.e.*, unabsolved).[3]

And against the Novatians, who denied the power of the Church of God to forgive sins, he writes as follows:

"In Peter they do not recognize the Rock [Christ], and are unwilling to believe that the

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[1] οὐ γὰρ, ὅταν ἡμᾶς ἀναγγεννῶσι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ μέτα ταῦτα συγχωρεῖν ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν ἁμαρτήματα. (*De Sacerdotio*, iii. 5, 6.)

[2] ἀναγκαῖον τοῖς πεπιστευμένοις τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῶν μυστηρίων τοῦ Θεοῦ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἐξομολογείσθαι. (*Reg. Brev. Tract. Respons. in Interr*, 288.)

[3] *Ep.* 180, *ad Honoratum* (*alias* 228, No. 8).

keys of the kingdom of heaven have been given to the Church."[1]

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Of St. Ambrose.

We find St. Ambrose reproaching these Novatians in somewhat similar terms. He writes as follows:

> "Thou, O Lord, dost wish to heal all men, but all are not willing to be restored. . . . [The Novatians] say that sins cannot be forgiven in the Church, although to Peter it was said: 'I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . .' and though the chosen Vessel of the Lord himself says, 'That which I have forgiven,—for your sakes have I done it, in the Person of Christ' (2 Cor. ii. 10). Why, then, do they read Paul, if they be so impious as to think that he claimed for himself the prerogatives of his Lord? On the contrary, he did not usurp that which was not due to him, but he did assert his right to that which he had received."[2]

He proceeds to point out the inconsistency of refusing to believe that priests have the power to forgive sins in Penance, although it is granted that they possess the same power in Baptism. After a reference to the sacramental unction of the sick, he writes thus:

> "Why do you baptize, if it be unlawful for sins to be forgiven through a man? In Baptism assuredly there is forgiveness of all sins. What difference is there if priests claim that this power has been bestowed upon them through Penance or through Baptism. The mystery in

[1] "In Petro petram non intelligunt et nolunt credere datas Ecclesiæ claves regni cœlorum" (*De Agone Christiano*, xxxi. 33).

[2] *De Pœnitentiâ*, I. vii. 32, 33.

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both is one. *But you say that the grace of the Mysteries works through Baptism. What, then, of Penance? Does not the Name of God work here, too?* Are you then free to claim for yourselves, where you will, the grace of God, and, where you will, to repudiate that grace?"[1]

St. Ambrose, however, states clearly the Catholic doctrine that priests have no power to forgive the sins of those who come to Confession craftily (*dolo*), without purpose of amendment.[2]

And of St. Leo.

Somewhat later we find St. Leo writing in a famous passage:

"The manifold mercy of God comes to the assistance of the falls of men in such wise that the hope of eternal life is restored not only by the grace of Baptism, but also by the medicine of Penance, so that those who have violated the gifts of regeneration [or, as we should say, who have fallen into mortal sin after Baptism], may, by condemning themselves by their own judgment, come to the remission of their crimes—the helps given by Divine goodness having been

[1] "Cur baptizatis, si per hominem peccata dimitti non licet? In baptismo utique remissio peccatorum omnium est; quid interest utrum per pœnitentiam an per lavacrum hoc jus sibi datum sacerdotes vindicent? Unum in utroque mysterium est. Sed dicis quia in lavacro operatur Mysteriorum gratia. Quid in Pœnitentia? Nonne Dei Nomen operatur? Quid ergo? Ubi vultis, vindicatis vobis Dei gratiam: ubi vultis repudiatis" (*Ibid.*, viii. 36). The parallel effects of Baptism and Penance are insisted on not only by St. Ambrose, but also by (amongst other Fathers) St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Leo.

[2] *Epist.*, lxvii. 11.

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> thus ordered, that the pardon of God cannot be obtained excepting by the supplications of priests. For the mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, has delivered to the rulers of the Church the power, both to impose upon those who confess, the action of penance [or, as we should say, satisfactory penances], and to admit such when they have been purified by a salutary satisfaction to the communion of the Mysteries, through the gate of reconciliation."[1]

Moreover, this great Pope lays it down that public confession is not necessary, but that it is enough for the stains of consciences to be made known to priests alone in a secret confession.[2]

Quotations such as these, which might easily be multiplied, show the danger of assumptions *a priori*, without any attempt to support them by solid proof, as to what "Scottish-Irish" or "Anglo-Saxon," or any other supposititious influences may or may not have effected.[3]

The view of French anti-Catholic historians,

IT is hard to find two assailants of Catholicism who agree in anything save in opposition to the teaching of the Church. Thus the French anti-Catholic historians, far from holding with

[1] *Epist.*, cviii. 2. [2] *Epist.*, clviii. 2.

[3] It seems, however, to be the fact that it was due to the influence of Irish monks, and especially to that of St. Columbanus, that the habitual confession of *venial* sins (never, of course, at any period regarded as necessary) was transferred, as a devotional and optional custom of ordinary use, from the monasteries to the faithful in general. (*Cf.* M. Vacandard, *Rev. du clergé franc.*, 15 *Mars*, 1899, p. 147.)

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And that of Mr. Conybeare contradict the theory of Harnack.

Harnack that Confession came out of the cloisters, are fond of asserting that it was once universal, and that in process of time the power of Absolution was restricted to the priesthood.

Or again, we find a recent English writer taking a line of his own on the matter. Mr. Conybeare has instructed his readers on the origin of "the Sacrament of Penitence," which, he informs us, "is inspired by the very convenient and roomy doctrine that, no matter how often and how wilfully a man sins, he can always by Confession and Penance expiate his guilt and be reconciled to the Church." We notice here the confusion between the remission of the guilt of sin *in foro interno*, and reconciliation to the body of the Church *in foro externo*, and the ignoring of Catholic teaching, that no sin can be forgiven without sorrow of heart and purpose of amendment. "This Sacrament of Penitence," Mr. Conybeare traces to the action of Pope Callistus in Rome "about 218 A.D."

Every non-Catholic controversialist differs from his fellow when he attempts to ascribe the beginning of sacramental Confession to any definite date. They agree only in ignoring not merely the testimony of those who have received the tradition of Confession from their fathers, but also the evidential force of the words of Christ.

By his well-known edict Pope Callistus

declared that persons who had been guilty of certain terrible sins of the flesh should be absolved after they had done penance.[1] This precept, which the Pope grounded on the principle that the Church had the power of pardoning sins,[2] was rendered necessary in consequence of the rigorous tendency of the times. Some fifteen years before Callistus became Pope, the great Tertullian had apostatized from Catholicism to become a Montanist. This edict of Callistus made him still more bitter in his denunciation of that which he considered to be the laxity of Rome. It can, however, be proved conclusively that Callistus was only reasserting the Scriptural doctrine concerning the power of the keys and the forgiveness of sins through Christ.

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The Sacrament of Penance not instituted by Pope Callistus.

It must always be remembered how exceedingly small in volume is the very early literature of Christianity. Besides the New Testament, we have nothing but the "Shepherd" of Hermas, a short tract called the "Didache," and about a dozen letters of the Fathers, for the first one hundred and fifty years of the Christian era. It is clear that where the written evidence is so slight, no controversialist can have any right whatsoever to use the

Only a few Christian writings extant before time of Callistus.

[1] "Ego et mæchiæ et fornicationis delicta pœnitentiâ functis dimitto."

[2] "Habet potestatem Ecclesia delicta donandi."

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negative argument as against positive Catholic tradition.

Moreover, to some extent at least, it was already forbidden by the *Disciplina Arcani* (or "Discipline of the Secret," as it was called) for the Faithful to make known the mysteries of religion to the unbeliever. This prohibition was based upon Christ's injunction not to give that which is holy unto dogs, or to cast His pearls before swine. In accordance with this principle, only after Baptism was it deemed safe or right to communicate sacred knowledge, until then jealously guarded from possible profanation, even to catechumens. This reserve included the "Our Father" and the Creed. The scanty writings that have come down from quite primitive times are for this reason often vested in a studied ambiguity. However, of the little that we possess there is enough to prove that before the time of Callistus—indeed, from the commencement—it was believed that our Lord had given His Church the power to forgive sins, and that there was consequently a duty of making them known by confession. Thus Tertullian, whilst still a Catholic, wrote as follows for the consolation of the Christian sinner:

Testimony of Tertullian, whilst he was yet a Catholic.

> "You have offended, but can still be reconciled."[1]

[1] *De Pœn.*, vii. 14.

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He also laid it down that there is "a first hope" in Baptism, and "a second hope" in Penance, and continued thus:

> "God forbid that anyone so interpret our meaning as if . . . the redundance of heavenly mercy constituted a license for human temerity."[1]

Baptism and Penance were even placed by this early Father on the same footing as "the two planks, as it were, of human salvation."[2]

He compares those who, "mindful rather of shame than of their salvation," will not confess their sins, to sick people

> "who shrink from disclosing some horrible disease to the doctors, and perish through their bashfulness."[3]

Pope Callistus founded his right to decree that Absolution should be given even to the worst sinners, when repentant, on the words of Christ to St. Peter, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," etc.

To this, Tertullian, in his heretical days, replied:

And after he had become a Montanist.

> "Therefore dost thou venture to claim that the power of loosing and binding has devolved also upon thee—that is, upon every Church that is in relation (or communion) with Peter."[4]

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[1] *De Pœn.*, vii. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, xii. 9. [3] *Ibid.*, x. 1.

[4] "Idcirco præsumis, et ad te derivasse solvendi et alligandi potestatem, id est ad omnem Ecclesiam Petri propinquam" (*De Pudicitiâ*, xxi. 9). *Petri propinquam* is no doubt an obscure phrase, but the sense is unmistakable.)

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Now, what is the comment of Tertullian upon this early Papal claim? Simply that it is true that our Lord gave the keys to Peter, but to Peter personally and exclusively:

> "Upon thee, He said, I will build My Church. And I will give the keys to thee, not to the Church."[1]

To such a pass was the great Tertullian, now unhappily become a Montanist, driven by the exigencies of a false position.

Let us, however, turn from Tertullian, fallen from the Faith—from the Tertullian who, as a rigorist, in the *De Pudicitiâ* contradicts the very principles of mercy which, as a Catholic, he had proclaimed in the *De Pœnitentiâ*—to Irenæus, the holy bishop who, through Polycarp, connects us with Apostolic times, and we shall find these words:

And of St. Irenæus.

> "Certain heretics secretly corrupt the women who learn this doctrine from them. And many women who had been persuaded by them, and who afterwards returned to the Church together, have confessed this also with their other crimes."[2]

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[1] "Super te, inquit, ædificabo ecclesiam meam, et dabo tibi claves, non Ecclesiæ" (xxi. 10).

[2] *Adv. Hær.*, lib. i., vi. 3-7. St. Irenæus tells us that Cerdon, when at Rome under Pope Hyginus (A.D. 137-141), before the arrival of Marcion (about 142 or 143), "frequently coming into the church and recanting, went on in this way to the end, sometimes giving his secret teaching, at another time again recanting, at another time again reproved for his false teaching and separating himself from the assembly of the brethren" (*Ibid.*, iii. iv. 2).

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It is difficult to imagine either an earlier or a more explicit reference than we find here to the confession of secret sins in the primitive Church. St. Irenæus assures us that other persons confessed not merely the sins which they had committed with the soothsayer Marcus, but also the desires aroused by his evil practices.[1]

And of Origen.

The testimony of the great Origen is, however, if possible, even more striking. He writes as follows:

> "Consider, therefore, what the divine discipline teaches—namely, that sins should not be concealed; for as they who are troubled with indigestion, and have anything within them which lies crude upon their stomachs, are not relieved excepting it be removed, so sinners who conceal their evil practices and retain their sin within their own bosoms, feel in themselves an inward disquietude, and are almost choked with the malignity which they thus suppress. But by confession and self-accusation they discharge themselves of their burden."[2]

And again:

> "If a man has sinned in any of these ways, let him tell the sin that he has sinned, since all that we do will have to be told and made known. Whatever we do in secret, whatever sins we have committed, though merely in speech or even in our hidden thoughts, will all be published, all brought forward by him who urges us to sin and accuses us thereof, for he first tempts us to sin, and then accuses us after we have sinned. If, therefore, we forestall him in this life, and

[1] *Adv. Hær.*, lib. ii. 12-18.
[2] *Hom.* ii. *in Ps.* 37.

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become our own accusers, we baffle the malice of the devil, our foe and accuser."[1]

So, once more:

"If we reveal our sins not only to God, but to those who can heal our wounds and sins, our sins shall be blotted out by Him who says, 'Behold, I will destroy thine iniquities as a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy sins'"[2] (Isa. xliv. 22).

All these passages have been taken from the exceedingly meagre existing literature before the time of, or contemporary with, Pope Callistus, and, if necessary, more might be added to the same purpose.

Public Confession and Reconciliation in the early Church.

It is true that, at the commencement, in the case of grave sins of public notoriety, the Confession and Penance, and, at any rate, the final Absolution or Reconciliation with the Church, were usually in public;[3] but this is a matter not of *doctrine*, but purely of *discipline*, and therefore, as such, liable to change, accord-

[1] *Hom.* iii. *in Lev.*, n. 41.

[2] *Ibid.*, xvii. *in Luc.* 953.

[3] Those interested in the most obscure question of the primitive ἐξομολόγησις will find it discussed fully and with much learning by M. Batiffol in his *Études d'Histoire* (vol. i.); by M. Ranschen, Professor of Theology in the Catholic University of Bonn, in his *L'Eucharistie et la Pénitence Durant les Six Premiers Siècles de l'Église* (translated by M. L. Decker); and by the Rev. M. J. O'Donnell in his *Penance in the Early Church*. We may recall the words of St. Augustine: "Numquid perfecte de Trinitate tractatum est, antequam oblatrarent Ariani? Numquid perfecte de Pœnitentiâ tractatum est, antequam obsisterent Novatiani?" (*Enar. in Ps.* liv. 22).

ing to the various needs of different times. The Sacrament of Penance itself, in all its essential constituent parts, is seen clearly in existence and use from the days of the Apostles to the present hour.

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CATHOLICS have always believed without faltering that God has bestowed upon His Church the power of the remission of sins. This belief goes back to the words of Jesus Christ. It is His work, and His alone. No explanation of the Confessional in the twentieth century which obscures its dependence upon those words spoken in the Holy Land of old will bear the test of investigation. Link by link, chain by chain, the present is fastened on to the past, the divine idea of forgiveness permeating the Christian ages.

Faith and practice of Catholics in every age due to the words of Christ.

Once more we have found that Christ our Lord has effected that which He spoke, as has no other in the world's history. Once again His word has been creative in its operation, as is the Word of God alone. Who but One who is God as well as Man could induce popes and bishops, kings and queens, priests and monks, statesmen and soldiers, sailors and mechanics, nobles and labourers, more than nineteen hundred years after He had left this earth, to kneel down humbly at the feet of His human representative, that they may lay bare the secret

Christ has brought penitents to Confession.

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wounds of their souls—the dark places, it may be, of their lives—with one purpose only, to receive forgiveness in His Name, according to His plighted word? Is it conceivable that any other religious teacher who has ever lived should have induced his fellow-men to believe that he could himself forgive their sins, and had power to delegate his authority to those whom he should send in his name, to the end of time?

To any other, who should claim to forgive sins, there would have been said persistently and effectively that which *was* said, indeed, to Jesus of Nazareth in the house of Simon the Pharisee, but to Him was said in vain, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"[1] No other dare speak as Jesus spoke, when of His own authority He forgave the Magdalen, for Jesus alone is God.

This marvel of faith has been accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth, and by Jesus of Nazareth only. For the very work's sake,—seeing the word that He spoke fulfilled before our eyes—we believe in the Lord whom "God the Father sent." "As the Father sent Me, so send I you. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." In this promise men yet place their trust for time and for eternity.

Let any man who cavils at the claims of Christ

[1] Luke vii. 47-50.

produce such another moral miracle as is this; and then, but only then, may he venture to cross the path of Him who taught, not as the Scribes, but with authority, and on earth forgave sins as Man, in virtue of the power with which, in His Humanity, He had been clothed by His Father in heaven.

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WHEN our Lord was yet living in this world, there once came to Him a woman grievously tormented. She had spent much of her substance, to no purpose, upon many doctors. But she touched the hem of His garment, and virtue came forth from Him. Lo! she was healed. Many there are upon the earth to-day who have had a like sad story—a like recovery full of gladness and unearthly joy.

Christ alone can heal the ills of men.

They, too, had sought many so-called healers. Maybe they strove to find the anodyne for their agony of soul in the pursuit of pleasure, in the struggle for fame, in literary effort. Possibly they turned to some of the quack nostrums of modern times, or to some revived superstition of the past. But the burden still lay heavy, weighing intolerably upon their spirit. Sick at heart and sorry, they wandered through the ways of men until at length they sought anew the ancient paths, and found the stores of grace and peace, hidden, in His sweet mystery

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of healing and forgiveness, by the same Lord Christ who forgave sins of old in Galilee.

How many a confessor, if his lips were not sealed for ever, could tell of habits of sin renounced, of broken lives repaired, of terrible calamities averted, of homes saved from ruin, by the humble, continued use of the Sacrament of Penance. All this, to those who know—to those who use Confession and are acquainted with its power for good upon the character, is evidence that may not be contradicted, not only as to the efficacy of Confession as a remedy, but also in support of the divine power of Christ, the heavenly Physician to whom Confession is due.

Were He not God, His words would have been unheeded.

But to those who do not know,—to those who have never been to Confession, this argument from experience, in the very nature of the case, can make no appeal. But to them we may at least point out the *fact* of Confession and may remind them of the words of Christ.

Had He been less than God, the strange words that He spoke of old, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," which have beyond dispute actually created the Confessional, would have been borne away empty on the wind. If proof of this be needed, let any other, who is not God, greatly daring, speak thus, and he will find that his idle vaunt will die almost before it come to birth.

But the words of Christ cannot die. They

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linger in the ear, and haunt the imagination, and cheer the spirit, and soothe the heart, and give peace to the soul, as can no others. His words, and His words alone, in the Sacrament of Penance, which is the Sacrament both of His spotless Sanctity and of His enduring Love, make man bring forth fruits "meet for repentance." They testify to the Godhead of Him who thus leads sinful creatures to the divine forgiveness.

Not only the font, but the confessional also in every Catholic Church bears witness to the power of the Omnipotent.

If, as the Rationalist must needs aver, Christ gave His Apostles authority to forgive and to retain sins, not foreseeing the future, and the confessional has resulted, this is indeed an inexplicable coincidence.

It is unimaginable, as we have already urged, that one who was nothing more than the son of a Jewish carpenter, born at Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth, should have been reported by disciples, already much discouraged through His death by crucifixion, to have declared, when risen from the dead, that, as His Father had sent Him so did He send them, with power to forgive sins; unless He be God, it is unthinkable that, in consequence of such a statement, men of all sorts and conditions, not merely in Palestine, but all over the world—in Vienna,

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for instance, or in New York—should, of their own free will, at the present day, confess their secret sins to the representative of that Oriental workman.

Is there any parallel in all the experience of mankind to any such relation of effect with cause—any parallel to an effect so remarkable emerging from a cause thus insignificant and, at first sight, so negligible?

If, on the other hand, Christ foresaw that which was to come, and of set purpose spoke words creating the Sacrament of Penance, this is a clear proof of His divine power.

To put it syllogistically:

NONE SAVE GOD ALONE COULD CREATE THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

For, none save God alone could make men believe not only that He could forgive sins Himself, but—more—that He could delegate this power to others yet unborn. And none save God alone could bring men all over the world for long centuries to Confession.

BUT, CHRIST HAS CREATED THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

His words are there to prove it for all time. In consequence of their belief in those words, men freely seek forgiveness at the hands of His priests.

THEREFORE, CHRIST IS GOD.

V

THE BELIEF OF CATHOLICS IN THE REAL PRESENCE—A PROOF OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

The Eucharist.

AFTER Baptism and Penance, the Eucharist. After the Sacraments of the Dead, the great Sacrament of the Living.

The author of the treatise *De Sacramentis* thus addresses the newly-baptized:

> "It remains that you should come to the altar. You are on your way thither. The angels have gazed upon you. They have seen you coming, and have beheld that state of your humanity which before was shameful with the darksome distress of sins, now of a sudden shine forth resplendent. And therefore have they said, 'Who is she that riseth from the desert, having been cleansed and made white?' At this even the angels wonder. Dost thou desire to know on what account they wonder? Such things have been bestowed on us, as even the angels desire to see. 'That which the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard . . . those things which God hath prepared for those that love Him.' Recognize, therefore, that which thou hast received."[1]

[1] *De Sacramentis* (inter opera S. Ambrosii), lib. iv., ii. 5: "Sequitur ut veniatis ad altare. Cœpistis venire: spectarunt angeli, viderunt vos advenientes, et humanam conditionem illam quæ ante peccatorum tenebroso squalore sordebat, aspexerunt subito refulgere. Ideoque

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This ancient writer proceeds, with much wealth of illustration, drawn from Jewish types and figures, to teach in unmistakable language the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence:

> "Thou hast come to the altar. Thou hast received the Body of Christ."[1]

Catholic Faith in the Real Presence.

THIS faith—the faith of the Church of God in the abiding Presence of Jesus Christ upon her altars—is, as all men know, the very centre of the devotional and spiritual life of her children. Like to the shining of the sun in the natural order of this world, is the Real Presence in the supernatural sphere—to Catholic men and women, the very sunshine of their lives, without which their days would be spent in a more or less ineffectual twilight.

As this planet revolves around the bright luminary of the heavens, so all the devotion of the Catholic Church centres in the Real Presence of the true Sun of Justice. He it is who, from His tabernacle where He dwells sacramentally, both draws forth life and sustains

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dixerunt: Quæ est quæ ascendit a deserto dealbata (Cant. viii. 5)? Mirantur ergo et angeli. Vis scire quia mirantur? . . . Ea nobis esse collata quæ concupiscunt et angeli videre. Et iterum: Quod oculus non vidit nec auris audivit . . . quæ præparavit Deus diligentibus Se (1 Cor. ii. 9). Deinde quid acceperis recognosce."

[1] *Ibid.*, lib. v., iii. 12: "Venisti ad altare. Accepisti Corpus Christi."

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every living blade of spiritual growth. He alone vivifies the heart of the monk in his solitary cell. He alone gives the strength of resistance to a tempted child in the streets of London, struggling,—in loneliness, which, apart from the nearness of the Saviour in His Sacrament, would be loneliness without measure—against the unloosened powers of evil.

Catholic faith on this subject is indeed stupendous. On the hypothesis that it be in accordance with truth, it must be admitted to be a very "work of God." Men of the highest intelligence[1] believe, without faltering, that through the power and operation of God the Creator and the Sanctifier, the bread and wine upon the altar-table are changed, by effect of the words of consecration in the Mass, into the true Body and Blood of the risen and ascended Christ. They confess that He is there

[1] "When we reflect that Sir Thomas More was ready to die for the doctrine of transubstantiation, we cannot but feel some doubt whether the doctrine of transubstantiation may not triumph over all opposition. More was a man of eminent talents. He had all the information on the subject that we have, or that, while the world lasts, any human being will have. . . . We are, therefore, unable to understand why what Sir Thomas More believed respecting transubstantiation may not be believed to the end of time by men equal in abilities and honesty to Sir Thomas More. But Sir Thomas More is one of the choice specimens of human wisdom and virtue," etc. (See Macaulay's *Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes*, p. 544.)

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offered as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. Thence—so their faith teaches and assures them—He deigns to give Himself, as the Bread that cometh down from heaven, to be the spiritual food of those who receive Him in Holy Communion. He lives amongst us yet, in the human nature which He once assumed of Mary, His Mother. For those who have eyes to see, the still light, burning day and night before His veiled sacramental Presence, bears its faithful testimony to His mysterious nearness to us all, the wide world over. Wherever men travel on the earth, at no great distance from their own resting-place, may they find His tabernacle. It is His sweet will to be the comforter, friend, adviser of all who visit Him with faith in His chosen home. His delights are to be with the children of men.

> "What is an altar but the throne of both the Body and the Blood of Christ? . . .[1] There" (upon the altar) "at fixed periods His Body and Blood were wont to dwell"[2] [before the altars had been defiled by the Donatists]. . . . "You" [Donatists] "have imitated the Jews. They laid hands upon Christ on the Cross; by you has He been struck upon the altar . . .[3] you

[1] *De Schismate Donatist.*, VI. 1, 90. Quid enim est altare, nisi sedes et Corporis et Sanguinis Christi?

[2] *Ibid.*, 91. Christus cujus illic per certa momenta Corpus et Sanguis habitabant.

[3] *Ibid.* Hoc modo Judæos estis imitati: illi injecerunt manus Christo in cruce: a vobis percussus est in altari.

have broken the very chalices which bear the Blood of Christ."[1]

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In these burning words St. Optatus expresses the faith of Catholics of the fourth century. It is the faith of the Catholic Church at every period of her history—our faith to-day. He is Jesus our Emmanuel, our God with us indeed.

It is the most awe-inspiring belief the world has ever known. Here we find in His own creation, and here we adore, the substantial Presence of the great Creator, made Man for love of us—for the sinner as for the Saint, for the Magdalen as for the Immaculate. He who is the Saviour of all those who will come unto Him remains, indeed, "a hidden God."[2] But to the eye of faith He yet reveals His Presence. As St. Gregory the Great reminds us, "Well indeed was He born in Bethlehem, for Bethlehem means the House of Bread."[3] In Bethlehem He was made known aforetime, not only to the simple shepherds, but also to the Eastern sages who, offering to a Child mystical gifts, recognized and worshipped in the weakness of His infancy Him who was their King and Lord. He is now "discerned"[4] by Catholics of all

[1] *De Schismate Donatist.*, VI., ii. 92. Fregistis etiam calices, Christi Sanguinis portatores.

[2] *Cf.* Is. xlv. 15.

[3] *Cf.* Matins of Christmas, first lesson of the third nocturn.

[4] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

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degrees in the Blessed Sacrament of His lowliness.

This faith has inevitably blossomed forth into gorgeous worship and ceremonial. The gifts of the Magi, actual as well as spiritual, are once more offered—the myrrh of self-sacrificing service, and the frankincense and the gold—the incense that speaks of ascending prayer, the gold that tells of charity which counteth not the cost. The more He humbles Himself, the more will His Church exalt Him upon her altars.

What is the cause of Eucharistic faith and worship?

Let us then consider the subject from the point of view of one who hears of the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist for the first time. How is this faith, and this worship which is the product of this faith, to be accounted for? What is its cause? what its history? From whom has it sprung?

THREE possible hypotheses have been put forward to account for the facts:

Catholics and others believe that belief in the Real Presence is due to the words of Christ, their God.

(*a*) The faith of Catholics, of members of the Orthodox Church, of other Orientals, and at the present day of many Anglicans, that Christ is God, and that His words are to be taken in their literal sense—that He *does* give His true Body and Blood to be the food of the souls of His people.

(*b*) The various opinions of most Protestants,

who admit that Christ is God, but refuse to believe that the bread and wine are changed by Him into His Body and Blood, maintaining that they are signs, or figures, or representations of one who is present in spiritual effect only, or by subjective faith, and declaring that the Catholic doctrine is based upon a misunderstanding of His words and teaching.

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Protestants, for the most part, believe that Christ is God, but deny the truth of the Real Presence.

(*c*) The denials of Agnostics, Pantheists, followers of the New Theology, and the like, who agree in repudiating belief in Christ's Divinity, and therefore regard the Catholic faith in the Real Presence as a mere fable, or, at the highest, something esoteric—mysticism based on imagination, beautiful poetry.

Agnostics do not recognize either the Divinity of Christ or His Real Presence in the Eucharist.

Now, as we have already seen to be the case as regards the development of the Papacy, so here also it will strike us immediately that the present surroundings and setting of the Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church are externally most unlike those of which we read in the beginning. The late Professor Bickell has no doubt proved[1] that so far as *essentials*, and even the *general arrangement of parts*, are concerned, the ceremonies of the Mass have been derived from the ceremonial actually observed by Christ at the Last Supper.

[1] The late Dr. Skene published a translation of Bickell's work, *Messe und Pasche*, under the title, *The Lord's Supper and the Passover Ritual.*

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Want of external similarity between present Eucharistic worship and that of which we read in the New Testament.

Still, few things strike our imagination as being apparently more dissimilar from one another than are the magnificence and complexity of a pontifical High Mass in some great cathedral and the simplicity of the scene in the upper room when our Lord ate the Passover with His disciples. Few things are, on the surface, more unlike than the Breaking of Bread, of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles, and a triumphant service of Exposition and Blessing, at which that one Bread is lifted up for adoration in the twentieth century after Christ. From this evident lack of external resemblance it follows at least that no one can, even plausibly, allege that the Catholic Church has designed the ceremonial of the Mass or the Rite of Benediction, in order to fit into them her Eucharistic sacrifice and worship in such a manner as to correspond in minute detail with that which is recorded in the New Testament.

But Catholics believe that Eucharistic faith has been the same in the Church from the beginning of her history.

Catholics believe that the growth and evolution of Catholicism has been natural and normal, as is the growth of all life. In the kingdom of grace, growth is as ordered and inevitable as in the kingdom of nature. Life involves advance; stagnation is the forerunner of death. But the present faith of the Catholic Church, as distinct from the efflorescence of her ceremonial, is the identical faith yielded by the Apostles to the words of Christ in the begin-

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ning. In the summer (or, haply, it may be in the autumn) of her year, it differs in no way substantially from the belief of her springtime. All her teaching on this great Mystery, all her approved devotions, spring out of the words spoken by Christ her Lord, and recorded in the New Testament, even as, without let or hindrance, the tree grows from its appointed seed.

If these things be so, they constitute an extraordinary proof of the Divinity of Christ. What other man, "dead and gone," as they say of those who have left this world, could produce through long centuries the belief that he was still ever present amongst the inhabitants of the earth, in their midst, hidden from their bodily eyes, really living, though invisibly, under a most lowly form, to be the object of their supreme worship? Who else could thus elicit adoration of himself under the appearance of bread? If Christ, without any power save moral power, has achieved these unparalleled results so marvellously and unexpectedly, it is surely a divine work; He must really be what He claimed to be—the Son of God. Whereas it is equally clear that, if, as most Protestants contend, this faith in the Real Presence be false, He deliberately produced by His own emphatic words that which, on the Protestant hypothesis, is nothing less than idolatry. And this notwithstanding that He foresaw the shocking consequences which

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would necessarily follow from childlike faith and simple trust in His veracity. Surely an intolerable conclusion for a Christian, whether regarded from the intellectual or the ethical point of view; unthinkable, that God should have used words which, if taken in their plain unvarnished sense, He knew would be thus abused, —impious to imagine that He should thus deceive the very men who have held fast to Him, in spite ofttimes of terrible persecution, counting the loss of all things as gain, so that they might win Christ.

Set fire to the heather, a conflagration will result. Let such words as the Gospels have preserved be spoken, and—given faith in the Divinity of Christ—belief in transubstantiation leaps at once into being, enkindled by Christ Himself, in the Christian consciousness.

Witness of the Evangelists on this subject.

THAT there is no escape from this conclusion becomes manifest from an investigation of that which the Evangelists tell us of the Words of Christ concerning the gift of His Body and Blood. Let us examine this matter with all the care we may. It is of the greatest consequence to the conduct of our present inquiry.

We shall, then, in the first place, find that the author of the Fourth Gospel narrates[1] that Jesus

[1] John vi. 48-69.

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The evidence of the Eucharistic promise given by St. John.

Christ had worked many great miracles, showing that He had power over the forces of Nature, and could derogate from their laws at His will. Before the commencement of His public teaching He had changed water into wine, and just recently He had fed five thousand men with five barley loaves and a few small fishes. After this last marvel of divine power, the multitude cried out that He was the Prophet who was to come into the world, and wished to make Him a king. But for the public manifestation of His Royalty the hour had not yet come, so "He fled again into the mountain alone." Later on, "when it was now dark," Christ was seen by His disciples walking upon the waters as though they were dry land, showing once more that natural laws would give way before His Presence. The next day He was surrounded by a great crowd, who had "found Him on the other side of the sea." To them and to the Scribes and Pharisees in the synagogue our Lord spoke, reminding them of the miraculous food which He had so lately bestowed upon them, and urging them not to labour "for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you." They then asked what they "should do that they might work the works of God."

And Jesus said to them: "This is the work

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of God, that you believe in Him whom God hath sent."

The miracle which our Lord would cause these men to work, if they would but surrender the consent of their own wills, was to be a spiritual "work"—the miracle of faith and simple confidence in Himself, "whom God hath sent."

Now, the Jews did not straightway reject this claim, nor did they at once refuse the tribute of faith which Christ demanded. They hesitated, and reminded Him of the signs given to their fathers, more especially of the wonder of "the manna in the desert," and asked for further signs like unto that which had been given of old in the wilderness. If Christ fed the multitude, Moses bestowed the manna from on high. Before leaving Moses for Christ, they would fain see some greater work performed by Christ than that which had been witnessed by their ancestors in answer to the prayer of Moses.

> "What sign dost Thou show that we may see and may believe Thee? What dost *Thou* work?"

To this the uncompromising answer came without delay:

> "Your fathers did eat manna and are dead, but the Bread which I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world. If

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any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever."

Yes, the reality should be indeed greater far than the type or figure.

Let us listen to St. Augustine: ✠

"He is Himself the Bread which came down from Heaven,—Bread which, while it refreshes the failing, itself fails not (qui reficit, et non deficit); Bread which can be tasted, but cannot be wasted (qui sumi potest, consumi non potest). Of this Bread the manna was a figure. Wherefore has it been said: 'He gave them the Bread of Heaven, and the Bread of Angels man did eat.' Who, then, is the Bread of Heaven, save Christ? But, in order that man might eat the Angels' Bread, the Angels' Lord was made Man. For if He had not been made Man, we should not have had His Flesh, and if we had not had His Flesh, we could not eat the Bread of the altar."[1]

And to St. Ambrose:

". . . It is the Body of Christ. Consider, then, which is the greater—the bread of Angels [the manna], or the Flesh of Christ, which assuredly is the Body of Life. The former was from heaven, the latter is above heaven; the former belonged to heaven, the latter belongs to the Lord of the heavens; the former, if kept beyond a day, was subject to corruption; the latter is a stranger to all corruption, of which let whosoever will eat as he should, and he shall not see corruption. For the Jews water flowed forth from the rock; for thee [the Christian] Blood flows forth from Christ; the Jews water refreshed for a moment, thy sins His Blood

[1] *Sermo* lxxx.

✠ 354-430

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washes away for everlasting ages. The Jew drinks, and is soon athirst; if thou dost drink, thou canst not thirst. The type was in shadow, the fulfilment is in truth.

"If that at which thou marvellest is but a shadow, how great is that at whose shadow thou dost marvel! . . . The light is greater than its shadow, the truth is clearer than its type, the Body of the Creator more excellent than manna from above."[1]

Yes, there should be no doubt remaining. The Bread of Life shall far surpass in wonder and in virtue even the bread of old, "containing in itself all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste."[2]

It is plain that nothing could have been more unexpected than this teaching. The Jews anticipated, with much curiosity, a fresh miracle. Instead of beholding new marvels they heard words of mystery and an uncompromising challenge. Consequently they "strove amongst themselves,"[3] and asked:

"How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?"

This question Christ refused to answer. He repeated His assertion, and, with still greater emphasis, reiterated His claim:

[1] *De Mysteriis*, viii. 47, 48, 49.

[2] "Panem de cælo præstitisti eis, omne delectamentum in se habentem." (Wisdom xvi. 20.)

[3] ἐμάχοντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους. Literally, "fought amongst themselves."

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> "Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

And then He even employed these bold words:

> "He that eateth Me (ὁ τρώγων με), he also shall live by Me."[1]

Now, many of His disciples who had heard this discourse said to one another: "This is a hard saying [and such indeed it was], and who can hear it?" "From that time" was it —so are we told expressly—that they refused further to bear His yoke, went back, and "walked no more with Him."[2]

Jesus, with much sadness, allowed them to turn aside and leave His company. But to the twelve He turned with the momentous question: "Will you also go away?", to receive from Peter's lips the great reply: "Lord, to

[1] John vi. 57. In this sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel the writer four times departs from the ordinary word φάγειν, to eat, and employs the word τρώγειν. This latter word means primarily "to chew," and ultimately "to eat," or "to take a repast." Its use suggests a spiritual oneness with Christ, analogous to the physical union of bread with the body effected at a meal.

[2] John vi. 67.

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Impossibility of metaphorical interpretation here.

whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of life eternal, and we have believed and know that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."[1]

It is inconceivable that our Lord should have acted thus, if, as so many Protestants maintain, He had not intended to give His Flesh to eat or His Blood to drink at all, save in figure. Inconceivable, if in truth He be God, that He should have permitted His responsible creatures to turn their backs on Him, to their irreparable loss, leaving unspoken that one simple word which, spoken, had cleared up all difficulties and taken all the "hardness" from His "saying." Christ, by allowing these inquirers to abandon His society, stands committed for all time to the sense in which the deserters understood His words—so far at least as that sense recognized their literal truth.

No one will count it "a hard saying" that Christians are to eat bread and drink wine *in memory* of their departed Lord; nor is it difficult "to hear" and to believe that Christ will bless those who remember Him with faith. If no more than this had been His meaning, who can doubt but that Christ would have made this clear, and have thus removed all ambiguity from His utterance?[2]

[1] John vi. 69. (R.V., "The Holy One of God.")

[2] When our Lord was misunderstood by Nicodemus concerning the new birth, He immediately explained the

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Had this been the true import of His words, never would He have suffered those who had sought Him laboriously, and who desired to learn of Him how "to work the works of God," to depart thus hopelessly, through a merely childish misconception.

It has, indeed, been urged that when our Lord saw that His disciples were troubled at His mysterious teaching, although He permitted them to leave Him, still, after all, He did explain that His words were metaphorical by asking them:

> "Does this offend you? What, then, if you shall see the Son of Man ascending whither He was at first? It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you are spirit and life. But some of you there are who do not believe."[1]

It is difficult to understand how the true significance of these words can have been misunderstood, for though the exact meaning may

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true signification of His words (John iii.). On another occasion, when His disciples misinterpreted the divine saying, "I have meat to eat which you know not of," He at once made clear both His own meaning and their mistake (John iv. 32). Such was His invariable custom. (*Cf.* Matt. xvi. 6-12 and John xi. 11.)

[1] John vi. 63, 64.

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not be certain, their general drift is unmistakable. So far from withdrawing or explaining away, they actually strengthen the teaching upon which Christ has just insisted.

Our Lord makes a further appeal for faith. "*Some of you there are who do not believe*"—that is, *literally*, for of any other kind of belief there was no question. Though that which He had said was doubtless "hard" to hear and to receive, yet—let them mark His words—they should live to witness the miracle of His Ascension. This should prove that His Flesh could not be, as they seemed to imagine, divided and torn asunder; it should also serve to corroborate and fortify their belief in Him and in His divine power.

"The spirit" (that is, spiritual insight) alone avails to enable us to accept mysteries impossible for "the flesh" (that is, merely human or natural judgment), which, in reference to supernatural marvels, "profiteth nothing."

This passage recalls the similar phrase which Christ had already addressed to St. Peter: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father"[1] (by "flesh and blood" here is clearly meant the voice, not of God, but of some sceptical man judging merely by appearances), and that which He had said to the Jews: "You judge according to the flesh"[2] (not super-

[1] Matt. xvi. 17. [2] John viii. 15.

naturally, but according to merely natural lights and views).

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By "the flesh that profiteth nothing," it is evident that that divine Flesh of Christ united to the Spirit of the Word cannot be meant, of which our Lord had just said: "The Bread which I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world."[1] Thus St. Augustine writes:

> "The flesh profiteth nothing—that is, the flesh alone. But let the spirit come to the flesh, and then it profiteth vastly. For if the Flesh had profited nothing, the Word would not have become Flesh."[2]

Nor can any authority whatsoever be adduced from any parallel passage in support of the contention that by "flesh" is denoted a *literal*, and by "spirit" a *metaphorical*, interpretation of the words of Christ concerning eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood.

In any due consideration and balancing of the claims of two opposite interpretations of any passage one against the other, we must follow the line of least (intellectual) resistance. Thus, when our Lord says that He is the true vine, the whole context is metaphorical, the Father being described as a husbandman, and the Apostles as branches.[3] But there are

[1] John vi. 52.

[2] *Tractatus* xxvii. *in S. Joan. Evangelium.*

[3] So when Christ said, "I am the Door," His meaning could not, and cannot, be mistaken. He resembles a

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some sayings which it is absolutely impossible to understand metaphorically, as if one were to say that a horse would speak with the voice of a man, or that guns, after having been fired, would be silent. Now the very possibility of metaphor when Christ spoke of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood was precluded by the admitted fact, that the one established metaphorical sense which would at once occur to the minds of the hearers was so contrary to all that He was saying as to be out of the question.

The only figurative sense of this expression amongst the Jews was to effect the bitterest injury that one man can do to another. It was never understood of love and confidence or of affectionate remembrance, but, on the contrary, of hostility and calumny. For example, we find the phrase in the Psalms: "Whilst the wicked drew near against me, to eat my flesh."[1]

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door in this—that as through a door we enter a house, so through Him we may enter the house of God. But flesh and blood in no way resemble faith, nor does bread resemble His Body.

[1] Psalm xxvi. 2. (See also Eccles. iv. 5; Job xix. 22; Micah iii. 3; Jer. xix. 9; Gal. v. 15; James v. 3.) In a curious work called *The Apocalypse of the Virgin* (ascribed conjecturally by Dr. M. R. James to the ninth century—see *Texts and Studies*, ii. 3), Our Lady is taken by St. Michael to visit some of the lost souls in hell. "And the all holy one [the Blessed Virgin] said to

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The Jews, therefore, saw at once that the literal interpretation of our Lord's words was here the only possible one, and, as they would not accept this, they walked no more with Him, but turned their backs upon Him.

But He insisted, saying: "The words (*τὰ ῥήματα*) which I speak unto you are spirit and life." If this translation represents what our Lord really said, we have an emphatic declaration that the words which He had just spoken are to be accepted by faith, and are life-giving. It is, however, extremely probable that the Greek word *ῥήματα* should rather be translated, "The *things* of which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life"—that is to say, "are animated by the Spirit and are living."[1] According to this view, by *things* are meant

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the commander-in-chief [St. Michael]: Who are these standing up to the neck in the flame of the fire? And the commander-in-chief said: These, all holy one, are whosoever *ate of the flesh of men*. And the all holy one said: And how is it possible for one man to eat of the flesh of another? And the commander-in-chief said: Listen, all holy one, and I will tell thee. These are they whosoever brought down their own children out of their own wombs and cast them out as food for dogs, and whosoever gave up their brothers in the presence of kings and governors, *these ate the flesh of man*, and for this cause they are thus chastised." Surely Protestant controversialists must be hard pressed indeed when by *eating flesh and drinking blood* they understand *bare faith*.

[1] *Cf.* Luke i. 65; ii. 15; ii. 19 (especially); Acts v. 32; x. 37; xiii. 42.

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here such objective realities as "food," "bread," "flesh and blood," to which our Lord had been referring throughout the greater part of His discourse.

It should carefully be borne in mind that in the six other passages in the New Testament where we find reference to "flesh and blood," the phrase always refers to a living person.[1]

The conclusion necessarily follows that our Lord, when He deliberately spoke of "eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood," would thus intimate to His Jewish hearers that the heavenly food which He provided them was not dead matter, but a living substance—life. Thus, when He spoke of "the *living* Father,"[2] and of Himself as the *living* Bread,[3] is it not manifest that the Flesh and Blood which He at the same time provided for His disciples are themselves *living?* Otherwise they could not be, as He declared that they should be, themselves the source of *life*. To make this, if possible, still more clear, He varied the expres-

[1] Matt. xvi. 17; John i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 50; Gal. i. 16; Eph. vi. 12; Heb. ii. 14. *Cf.* learned articles by Father Stack in the *Tablet* of January 10, 1908, February 1, 1908, and August 27, 1910.

[2] John vi. 58. This is the only passage in Holy Scripture in which *the Father* is expressly spoken of as *living*. God the Father is the Fount of Life. Of Him we read: "With Thee is the fountain of life" (Psalm xxxv. 10).

[3] John vi. 51.

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sion, and spoke now not of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, but actually of eating Himself, and declared openly:

"He that eateth Me shall live by Me."[1]

Notwithstanding the light shed upon these words by the doctrine of the Real Presence, they may at certain moments fall even upon Catholic ears as "hard sayings." How much more difficult must they have sounded to the Jews who first heard them from the lips of Christ, before the Eucharist was instituted? But there was no toning down on His part, even though there were "some who did not believe." His words had expressed the great fact that was soon to be realized. For the moment they were left without further explanation or comment.

However difficult this literal sense may be, the difficulty is not *intellectual*, but *practical*, in its character. This is plain from the objection of the Jews: "How *can* this Man give us His Flesh to eat?" It is a question of power. But, if Christ be God, His power is divine, and therefore omnipotent. The matter resolves itself once more into rendering or refusing that faith in Him which throughout His public ministry He unhesitatingly demanded.

Let us give ear again to St. Augustine:

[1] John vi. 53.

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"We have heard the Lord Himself saying: 'It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you are spirit and life. But there are,' saith He, 'some who do not believe.' They said: 'This saying is hard; who can hear it?' Hard it is, but only to the hard-hearted—that is to say, it is incredible, but only to the incredulous."[1]

This truth has always been recognized by Catholics, and consequently we have the great fact that the faith in the Real Presence, with which throughout all the centuries they have met and vanquished the "hardness" of incredulity, has itself always been a "hard" faith. For more than a thousand years to no Catholic mind, whether intellectually trained or untrained, did the possibility of a symbolic interpretation of our Lord's words ever occur, any more than it occurred to the Jews. It was always a matter of belief in all simplicity, with here and there naked unbelief. The figurative interpretation came as an afterthought of Berengarius of Tours, late in the eleventh century, was at once condemned by the Church, and then nearly forgotten, until it was, during the Reformation period, revived, in one form or other, by Bucer, Œcolampadius, and Calvin.

[1] *Sermo* cxxxi. 1: "Durus est, sed duris; hoc est incredibilis, sed incredulis."

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The evidence as to the institution of the Eucharist given by the Synoptics.

ST. JOHN gives us the account of the promise of the life-giving Bread.

The other Evangelists narrate the accomplishment of that promise in the institution of the Eucharist. Now St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke agree in telling their readers that on the last night of His earthly life—"the night before He was betrayed"—Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and said: "This is My Body"; and, blessing the Cup of Thanksgiving: "This is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for the remission of sins." These are the words which the Synoptic Gospels concur in recording as having been uttered by our Lord at the most solemn moment of His rapidly waning life.

Once more the question recurs with much insistence: If Christ is God, and therefore knew that His words would be understood in their literal sense by millions upon millions of His disciples in every age and in every Christian land, is it thinkable that He should have employed these words, without explanation or reservation, unless He indeed intended them to be literally believed? From whatever quarter denial of the Real Presence may originate, it certainly does not proceed from the pages of the Gospel.

Those who believe in the Divinity of Christ

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and in the inspiration of the Scriptures, but who fail to acknowledge that the words which our Lord employed at the Last Supper of necessity involve the dogma of Transubstantiation, should say plainly what form of speech they *would* accept as promulgating the Catholic Doctrine on this dread mystery. If "this is My Body, this is My Blood," be not adequate for the purpose, will they suggest *what other words* could convey with greater, or even with equal distinctness of affirmation, the meaning attached by the Catholic Church to the words of Christ? If *Hoc est Corpus Meum* will not suffice for this purpose, what formula in their judgment would suffice?

For one who believes in Christ, the argument of St. Cyril of Jerusalem should surely be decisive: "Since, then, He has declared and said of the bread, 'This is My Body,' who after that will venture to doubt? And seeing that He has affirmed and said, 'This is My Blood,' who will raise a question and say that it is not His Blood?"[1]

"The Bread that I *will* give is My Flesh."

These are the words of Jesus Christ in the synagogue of Capernaum.

"This *is* My Body."

[1] *Cat.* xxii., *Mystagog.* 4.

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These are His words in the supper chamber of Jerusalem.

In the synagogue He had said:

> "He that eateth *Me*, the same *shall* live by Me."

The night before He died He fulfilled His promise:

> "Take ye and eat; this *is* My Body."

If these words do not mean that which Catholics believe—we repeat our question—what words could express that meaning?

Faith of Catholics in the Real Presence proof of the Divinity of Christ.

That within a few years of the first Eucharist it was recorded that these words were used by Christ there is no doubt. If then, in fact, He has accomplished that which He has said; if His words were creative words; if through them He has produced the faith of Catholics in His Real Presence, and by implication has stamped the warrant of His approval on Eucharistic worship in every age, then here—let us urge it once more—we find evidence of a power which can be nothing less than divine. For could any save God alone have accomplished these wonders, or anything resembling them?

WERE any man to-day to promise that he would give his flesh to eat and his blood to drink, we should all say exactly what,

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No man could effect this, excepting one Man who was God.

as a matter of fact, the Jews actually did say: "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?" Were any man on the last evening of his life to declare that that which seemed bread was his body, and that that which seemed wine was his blood—"This is my body, this is my blood"—we should argue that he was mad, and in all probability should presently forget that such vain and foolish things had been spoken at all.

But Jesus of Nazareth was not as other men. Before He made these stupendous statements He had established His claims upon the allegiance and the faith of those who, having watched Him closely, had begged Him to teach them also to do the works of God. He had changed water into wine at Cana. He had fed five thousand men in the desert with a few loaves which had been miraculously multiplied beneath His hands. He had declared that He would give His Flesh to eat, His Blood to drink. And only after this careful preparation of the minds of His Apostles did He accomplish that which He had promised, giving them His Body and Blood to be the food of their souls.

Catholic faith in Transubstantiation, Catholic worship which centres round the Blessed Sacrament, is the proof to-day of the truth of His most divine promises. Countless numbers of men and women, in every clime and in every

class of society, of all degrees of mental culture and attainment, believe that He does in very truth give His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink, in a sacramental, transcendental, supersensuous manner indeed ("spirit-wise," if you will,[1] for His Body is here without "extension"),

[1] *Cf.* St. Ambrose: "In illo sacramento Christus est; quia Corpus est Christi; non ergo corporalis esca, sed spiritalis est. Unde et Apostolus de typo ejus ait: 'quia patres nostri escam spiritalem manducaverunt, et potum spiritalem biberunt'; Corpus enim Dei Corpus est spiritale; Corpus Christi Corpus est divini Spiritus; quia Spiritus Christus, ut legimus: 'Spiritus ante faciem nostram Christus Dominus'" (*De Mysteriis*, ix. 58). These words, of course, must not be understood as though this great mystical Doctor denies the *reality* of the Body of Christ. (*Cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 44.) On this subject Bellarmine writes (*De Sacramento Eucharistiæ*, lib. i., cap. ii.): "Itaque dicemus carnem [Christi in Eucharistiâ] esse corporalem non spiritalem, nisi nomen spiritale sumatur sicut 1 Cor. xv. 44, *seminatur corpus animale, surget spiritale:* id est obediens spiritui in omnibus. . . . Ut saepe diximus, *non habet Christus in Eucharistiâ modum existendi corporum, sed potius spirituum*, cum sit totus in quâlibet parte. Itaque dicemus Christum esse in Eucharistiâ, vere, realiter, substantialiter ut Concilium [Tridentinum] recte loquitur, sed non dicemus corporaliter, id est eo modo quo suapte naturâ existunt corpora, nec sensibiliter, mobiliter, etc., Immo contra dici posset esse spiritaliter, ut Bernardus dicit in sermone de Sancto Martino, ubi affirmat in Sacramento exhiberi nobis veram carnis substantiam, sed spiritaliter non carnaliter. Tamen non videtur haec vox multum frequentanda, quia periculum esset, ne traheretur ab adversariis, non tam ad modum, quam ad ipsam naturam significandam, propter quod item periculum non videtur valde usurpandum illud, non esse corporaliter, nisi addatur continuo explicatio.

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but yet most really and most truly. He has said it. His Church declares it. We believe it. The fact that we believe it solely because He said it, and because His Church instructs us as to the true meaning of His words, is a proof that He is God, for such faith could be produced in men by God alone.

No man, save He who called Himself distinctively the Son of Man, in order to remind us that He is also the Son of God, has ever produced belief in himself on the part of his disciples comparable to this belief in Christ.

Teachers of wide repute, like Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus of old, and many others among the moderns, may call upon their disciples to subscribe to their particular school of opinion, and to give a more or less tentative assent of the intellect to some abstract theories or principles. But such philosophical propositions, ordinarily at least, call for no practical consequences in the conduct of life, demand no difficult exercise of self-suppression, and are conditioned by their possible displacement in the evolution of the thought of the future. But what other power, save that of God, can suffice to bring the naturally sceptical mind of man to confess that He, who was crucified on Calvary's Hill, has actually risen, in His Body, from the dead,—to believe, moreover, that He still re-

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mains upon the earth, hidden beneath appearances of bread and wine?

To what power, then, is it due that Catholics confess this mystery, not merely with their lips, but with full conviction of heart and mind? Through what mysterious influence is it that Catholics are so superlatively certain that their Lord and their God—His Majesty, it is true, shrouded from their bodily eye—gives Himself most truly to be their very life? How comes it that Catholics believe that even as he who eats natural bread transforms that bread materially into himself, so (but contrariwise) he who eats the supernatural Bread, which is Christ, is transformed spiritually by that Bread, and becomes one with Him? Unless strengthened by divine influence, how comes it that they know that as the Eternal Son lives "by the Father,"[1] even so, through sacramental communion, they may live by Him, and thus be enabled to say with His Apostle:

> "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

[1] Καθὼς . . . κἀγω ζῶ διὰ τὸν Πάτερα, καὶ ὁ τρώγων με, κἀκεῖνος ζήσεται δι' ἐμέ. Ζῶ διὰ τὸν Πάτερα refers primarily to our Lord's *divine* life. *A Patre habet ut sit.* Τρώγειν, as we have already seen (p. 265, *n.*), means to take as food. This passage, accordingly, should be translated thus: "Even as I live by the Father, so he also who receives Me as food shall have His life from Me, even as I have My life from the Father" (John vi. 57).

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"How shall he die," writes St. Ambrose, "whose food is life?"[1]

In this sublime faith, in this absolute self-surrender to the Life of Christ within the Christian soul, in this supreme hope we see the finger of God, and of God alone.

Tertullian's "credibile, quia ineptum, quia impossibile."

THIS is the meaning of the well-known saying of Tertullian in the second century. That great thinker had already given the world a long and carefully reasoned apologetic, marshalling forth in due sequence those famous arguments for the truth of the Christian religion, which should by now be familiar to all educated people. But when he was writing a curious treatise on the Flesh of Christ, against Marcion the Gnostic, who had denied the reality of the Body of our Lord, on the ground that the Incarnation and all which it involved was unworthy of God, Tertullian broke out into these well-known words:

> "The Son of God has died. Because it is foolish, it is altogether credible. And having been buried, He has risen. Because it is impossible, it is certain."[2]

"It is altogether credible, because it is foolish." When writing this strange sentence

[1] *Sermo* xviii. *in Ps.* cxviii.

[2] *De Carne Christi*, cap. 5. "Mortuus est Dei Filius. Prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est. Et sepultus resurrexit. Certum est, quia impossibile."

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there can be no doubt that the African theologian of the second age after Christ had before his mind the divine paradox, with which the Apostle of the Gentiles had assailed the intellectual pride of Corinth in the first age:

> "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For see your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise unto the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise, and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound

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the strong . . . That no flesh should glory in His sight."[1]

God will triumph where to man triumph would be impossible. The Jews sought a sign, and the Greeks craved wisdom. The answer of God was the sign of the Cross and the folly of the Crucified. By humility He shall reign, and by emptying Himself shall He fill the hungry with good things. The weakness of God shall be stronger than the strength of all that can be opposed or run counter to His divine purposes. By His poverty He shall enrich.[2] By His death He shall give life. By His Cross He shall subdue the grave. By "His foolishness," His simplicity, His self-surrender, His defiance of merely human prudence, He shall tame the wisdom of those who are wise in their own conceits. By enduring unheard-of insults He shall win love and worship. By the teaching of unlearned fishermen He shall draw the learned to Himself. All this is divine. It is not as men would argue or as men would act. Still, it is to be believed, for it is the "foolishness of God," of which the Corinthians had already heard from Paul of Tarsus. "It is certain, for it is impossible"—impossible, that is, to men.[3] No human being could ever of

[1] 1 Cor. i. 20-29.

[2] *Cf. Thomassinus, de Incarnatione*, li. i.

[3] In view of prevalent misconceptions, it may be well to point out that by *impossibility* Tertullian does not

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himself have even conceived the idea of the divine "folly of the Incarnation, of the Crucifixion, of the Eucharist"—the "divine folly,"[1] that is, of the love of God.

No man could have invented such a religion or devised such an "economy of redemption,"[2] but God has revealed it. Therefore man believes it. It is certain, because it is "impossible" to

mean the metaphysical impossibility which even God cannot annul. He would say: "As these Christian mysteries are (humanly speaking) impossible, I give to them *faith*, not reasoned assent independently of divine authority. It is reasonable to believe in God, and—paradoxical though it sound—His teaching actually recommends itself to me as coming from God, because to man it is impossible."

[1] Two mystics in latter days—St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi and St. Gerard Maiella—have "greatly dared" to say that God became a fool for love of man, and that, therefore, they would become as fools in the eyes of men for love of God.

[2] Human wisdom prescribes the use of means proportionate to the end in view, which are able to bring that end to pass according to the operation of the laws of Nature. To use means which are not in themselves calculated to produce the required effect is to men *foolishness*, because by such means it seems hopeless to attain the desired result. But God Almighty manifests His divine action precisely by the use of means, which to a man would seem foolish. Thus the death of the Son of God, made Man, is, as a way to life and happiness, the means of all others of which human intelligence would never dream. To men, apart from revelation, such action must necessarily appear "foolish," because disproportionate. By His choice of such means, God sets the seal of His Divinity upon them, for God is infinitely greater than man, and transcends all human thought—otherwise He would not be God.

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unaided human thought, and possible only to Him to whom all things are possible, save to contradict Himself.

That God should become Incarnate, that God in His human nature should be crucified, and that God should give Himself as Sacrifice and as Food for His creatures—these are divine ideas, which, had not God made them known, could never have been imagined by the mind of man. That He, who is essential Love, should, out of His love for men, Himself become mortal Man to die for men, that the Word made Flesh should still remain upon the earth, to unite His own creatures to Himself in the Communion of His very Body and Blood, and thereby to make them partakers of His own divine Life—this is not the philosophy of sages wise in their own conceits, nor is it the dialectic eagerly sought for by the Greeks of old; but to us who believe it is both "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation." It is this wondrous work which both the Catholic Church and the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament assure us that Christ promised to effect by the mystery of the giving of His Body and Blood.

Witness of St. Paul to the Real Presence.

WE have considered the record of the Evangelists, but this is not all the evidence available from the New Testament. There is yet another witness—one who states

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of himself that he was "born out of due time," and that he was "the least of the Apostles, not worthy to be called an Apostle," because he had "persecuted the Church of God."[1]

In considering the testimony of St. Paul, we fall upon a line of proof which is quite distinct from that obtained by a study of the Gospels. The great Doctor of the nations frequently insists, even with vehemence, that the Faith had not come to him (as it came to other believers in the early days of Christianity) from the lips of one of those Apostles who had themselves seen our Lord, or (as it comes to us in these later times) through the Apostolic Church. Like Peter and James and John, Paul had received the priceless gift immediately from Christ Himself. Thus, writing to the Corinthians, he assures them that he had "received *of the Lord* that which also" he had "delivered unto" them;[2] and to the Galatians he declared that he is "Paul, an Apostle, not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ";[3] and again: "Neither did I receive it [the Gospel which he preached] nor did I learn it of men, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ."[4]

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 23; *cf.* xv. 3.
[3] Gal. i. 1.
[4] Gal. i. 12. *Cf.* also Acts xx. 24; Eph. iii. 3; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1; Tit. i. 3, etc. In 1 Cor. xv. 3-8 St. Paul tells us that he "received" an ac-

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St. Paul's evidence is therefore independent of that delivered by all others. This should always be carefully borne in mind.

Now, the Apostle of the Gentiles declares solemnly that he also had

> "received of the Lord . . . that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας), broke and said: Take ye, eat; this is My body which is for you;[1] this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice, after He had

count of the appearances of the Risen Christ, but in *this* case he does not add the significant words, "of the Lord."

[1] In many MSS. we find τοῦτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κλώμενον ("This is My Body, which is *broken* for you"). The verb *to break* (like the parallel word *given* employed by St. Luke), when used in Scripture with reference to eating, means *to distribute as food.* (*Cf.* Lam. iv. 4; Matt. xiv. 19, xv. 36; Mark viii. 19; Luke xxiv. 36; Acts ii. 46, xx. 7, 11, xxvii. 35; 1 Cor. x. 16.) The force of the expression, therefore, is "This is My Body, which is now laid before you in the shape of food." It is equivalent to St. Luke's *given for you*, words expressive of Sacrifice, for they correspond not only with John vi. 51, but also with the analogous words used by all the Synoptics of the Blood of Christ, as "*shed for you, shed for many, for the remission of sins.*" The three oldest MSS., however, have only τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ("This is My Body, which is for you"—that is, "on your behalf," "the offering on your behalf"). Westcott and Hort think that κλώμενον was introduced from ἔκλασε in the preceding verse.

supped, saying: This chalice is the New Covenant (διαθήκη) in My Blood. Do this, as often as you may drink it, for the commemoration of Me."[1]

Here we find the account, which St. Paul believed to have been supernaturally revealed to him by the Lord of whom he "received it," recorded almost in the words of St. Luke, and substantially in those employed by St. Matthew and St. Mark in their account of

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25: Τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. These are the very words, without the smallest variation, that are used by St. Luke in his Gospel. It may be noted that διαθήκη, ποιεῖτε, and ἀνάμνησις are, admittedly, sacrificial terms. Διαθήκη (covenant) would have suggested Exod. xxiv. 8 to the Apostles (*cf.* Heb. ix. 20 and xiii. 28), and this must have pointed to a sacrificial use of blood in the new rite. The verb ποίεω (in English versions translated "do") occurs sixty-nine times in the Septuagint in the sense of sacrificing or offering, and in a large number of other cases it is used of "keeping" a feast—notably the Passover, which of necessity included offering the appointed sacrifices. Ἀνάμνησις (memorial) is used in Lev. xxiv. 7, where the word denotes the frankincense laid on the shew-bread "for a memorial, even *an offering* made by fire unto the Lord," and in Num. x. 10, where the silver trumpets are ordered to be sounded "for a memorial before God over your burnt-offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings." The language used by our Lord must therefore of necessity have suggested a sacrifice to the Apostles. He was instituting the great rite, of which the Passover was the type. That rite still remains—the Sacrifice of the Mass—yet another witness to the creative power of God.

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the institution of the Christian mysteries on the night of the Last Supper.

It seems certain that two at least of the Pauline Epistles were written before the first Gospel, and it has been suggested by some anti-Catholic writers, without an atom of proof (or even probability, except, perhaps, in the case of St. Luke[1]), that the Synoptics derived their account of the institution of the Eucharist from St. Paul. But even if this were the fact, the force of the main argument would remain unshaken. Who was Saul of Tarsus that, without divine assistance, he could produce and maintain through wellnigh twenty centuries the world-wide faith of Catholics in the Real Presence of Christ upon the altar?

It was the duty of the writers of the Gospels to content themselves with relating, without comment, the words and deeds of their Lord. They were simply *historians*. St. Paul, on the other hand, like all Christian *teachers*, had a further object in view. It was his province to draw the appropriate conclusions from the divine actions, and even to comment on the words, of Christ. Therefore, it is without surprise that we find the Apostle writing to the Corinthians in the beginning:

"The Cup of Blessing which we bless,

[1] *Cf.* "Paul was the illuminator of Luke" (Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion.* v. 5).

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> is it not a communion in the Blood of the Christ? And the Bread which we break, is it not a communion in the Body of the Lord? Because we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one Bread."[1]

It is a matter of extraordinary interest to find here not merely the words of Christ, but the explanation of those words given by the great St. Paul in the beginning. Moreover, we know how, even in the first days of their conversion, he warned these same Corinthians:

> "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread or drink the Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord."[2]

And again:

> "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord."[3]

Such sayings as these may surely be left to speak for themselves. They contain a solemn admonition, such as has been addressed in every age by a Catholic pastor to his flock. There is no mention of any merely symbolical action.

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 27. [3] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

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On the contrary, St. Paul refers to men "being guilty of the Body and the Blood of the Lord," and to "an eating and drinking of judgment," which could not possibly ensue upon the eating of mere bread and the drinking of mere wine. However deeply steeped in sin a man may be, he cannot make his sin more grievous in the sight of God by eating bread and drinking wine, whilst thinking of Christ; on the contrary, this may even be conceived of as a good action, which may well lead to repentance. But not to discern the Body of the Lord, and therefore to receive that Body unworthily—this it is on account of which many "are weak and sickly among you, and not a few sleep."[1] It is this which draws down "the judgment of the Lord" upon him who profanes the Body of Christ. *Corpus Domini*—here we have the very phrase of unchanging, undying faith used by the Catholic Church for the great Feast in the summer-time.

The above are well-known passages, but none the less remarkable for being well known. My object in quoting them is to ask the question: "Is it possible that a man of the commanding genius and dominating personality and force of character that are manifest in St. Paul's writings should have received this most mysterious doctrine in an unreal vision, that he should have communicated it to the world, and

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 30.

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that it should have been believed through long ages, and be found in the end to be nothing more than a cunningly devised fable or an idle superstition. To ask a Christian man to make such an assertion is to ask him not merely to belittle the evidence of Paul the disciple, but also to name the Lord and Master, whom Paul served, the deceiver of His people. To call upon a thinking man, who, perchance, may not yet be a Christian, to believe this is to make a far greater demand upon his credulity than has ever been made upon human faith by the Christian Church, even in this high Sacrament, which, from the very outset, has been known as the *Mysterium Fidei*—the touchstone of faith[1]—amongst the disciples of Christ.

This much is certain. Our Lord is reported from earliest times both to have declared that He would give His Body and Blood to be the food of men, and to have fulfilled His word. St. Paul believed it in the beginning. The Catholic Church believes it at this day. She has ever believed it through all the ages of her history.

"What is an altar, but the throne of the Body and Blood of Christ?"

Here we have the unmistakable language of Catholicism.

"This is My Body. This is My Blood."

[1] John vi. 67; 1 Tim. iii. 9.

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Antiquity of faith in the Real Presence It comes from God.

Here we have the unmistakable language of Jesus Christ.

How great a tree to spring from so small a seed!

THAT the fact of the Real Presence has been believed from the first has been demonstrated again and again, and at the present day will hardly be denied. No colourable support can be adduced from history for the suggestion that there has been a continuous development of mystical thought in this regard. The evidence all tells the other way. There is no trace whatever in early Rome, or in any part of the Christian world, of the Sacrament of the altar being regarded in primitive times as a symbol or a bare commemoration. It is always the "Mystery of faith," on no account to be revealed to the heathen—is it not forbidden to cast pearls before the swine?—the awful Mystery for which men will die with joy.

The testimony of the Catacombs, of the earliest Fathers, of the ancient liturgies, is consentient, and leaves no possible room for doubt as to the belief of Antiquity in the reality of the Eucharistic Presence and Sacrifice.[1] We

[1] *Cf. La Perpétuité de la Foi de L'Eglise touchant l'Eucharistie*, by Nicole and Arnauld; or the Article on *Eucharist* in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*.

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need not, therefore, labour this point, or adduce patristic or other evidence for that which is no longer a matter of controversy.

If, then, this faith of ours and of our ancestors be not from God, whence comes it? If any man is prepared still to urge that the world-wide Faith of all the Christian ages in the mystery of the Real Presence is a delusion, we may fearlessly challenge him to match it from all the history of human thought since men first began to think at all. No merely human words could have conveyed conviction, such as is Catholic certainty as to the truth of Transubstantiation, to those who have gone before us; no one, who was man only, could have bequeathed so mighty and so supernatural a belief, as is this belief, to us or to our children. It is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

Est prorsus credibile, quia ineptum; est certum, quia impossibile.

God, and God alone, could say: "This is
My Body." God, and God alone,
can cause men to believe
His Word.

VI

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY A PROOF OF THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

BAPTISM and Penance, the Real Presence and the Papacy, are all great works of Christ. They witness to His divine power, testifying to His claim to be one with the Father.

For, as God, in the beginning of time, created the worlds by His fiat, "Let there be light, and there was light," even so did Jesus of Nazareth, at the commencement of the Christian dispensation, give effect to His divine purposes. His words, too, were creative.

Christ said, "Thou art Peter," and lo! it was accomplished: Simon, Bar-Jona, became a Rock.

"This is My Body" were the words that He spoke, and the heavenly Bread was given.

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven," was His declaration, and we have the remission of sins in His Name.

As the sun, giving its light in the heavens, testifies to the power of God the Father, so does the new creation bear witness to the

fruitful words of the Eternal Son. This new creation is His Church, bearing His divine gifts to men.

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Thus, the authority of the Holy See and the administration of the sacraments—above all, the Holy Eucharist—are standing proofs of the truth of Christianity. Were Christianity not true, it would be impossible to account reasonably for phenomena such as these, foreshadowed in the Gospel narrative, and brought out of nothingness by Him who, according to His own prediction, failed utterly, as men count failure, dying upon the Cross as a criminal, despised, scorned, and rejected, to triumph the more gloriously in the power of His Resurrection.

Explanation of devotion to our Lady given,

Now, the same line of argument may be followed with regard to the world-wide devotion of Catholics to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This, also, is a phenomenon that cries aloud for explanation.

By the Protestant,

How and whence did it originate? The extreme Protestant will answer with glib assurance that "Mariolatry" is a corruption contrary to the mind of Christ, due in the main to the tendency of fallen man to substitute the redeemed for the Redeemer, and to put the worship of the creature in the place of that of the Creator. He may very probably add that our Lord Himself foresaw this danger, and has on this subject been careful, by His words

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recorded in the Gospels, expressly to warn the generations that were to come.

By the Agnostic,

The Agnostic will argue that the veneration of Mary springs from the idealization of woman, from the appeal made by gentleness and motherhood to the heart of man; that devotion to our Lady is due to this influence or to the other, and may be traced to every cause that can be imagined, save only to the one sufficient cause

By the Catholic.

to which, without hesitation, it is ascribed by Catholics—the will of God and the operations of His Spirit, moving over the face of the waters in His holy Church.

Now it must be conceded frankly at the outset that, as there is no express Scriptural warrant for either the external pomp and circumstance of the Papacy of to-day or for the gorgeous ceremonial of Eucharistic worship, so once more the *primâ facie* conclusion that may be drawn from the New Testament will very likely seem to militate against the veneration paid, the wide world over, to the Mother of Jesus Christ.

Rarity of reference to Mary in the New Testament.

There is only one reference to the Blessed Virgin in the Acts of the Apostles, where we find her praying with the disciples of Christ before the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. In all the Epistles there are but two allusions to Mary, and of these one is doubtful. Most striking of all, it may fairly be

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Superficial Scriptural difficulties concerning devotion to our Lady.

argued from a superficial examination of the Gospels that they contain something akin even to disparagement — nay, to rebuke — of our Blessed Lady.

When the woman cried out from amongst the crowd at admiration of His teaching, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck," He answered, "Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it."[1] When He was told that His Mother and His brethren wished to speak to Him, He asked, "Who is My Mother and who are My brethren?" and answered His own question, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."[2]

Again, it is embedded deep in the popular subconsciousness of a Protestant country like England that when at the marriage-feast of Cana His Mother pointed out to her Son the lack of wine, He answered, to quote the Protestant translation, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"[3]

The words of Christ to His Blessed Mother were spoken by Him, with the full knowledge of the future before His gaze. Are they, then, really, or are they only apparently, inconsistent

[1] Luke xi. 27.
[2] Matt. xii. 47 *seq.*; Mark iii. 31 *seq.*; Luke viii. 19 *seq.*
[3] *Vide* Appended Note C.

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with Catholic faith and practice? If really so, Catholicism must fall, just as Protestantism is confuted if its denials of the special prerogatives of St Peter and of the Real Presence are inconsistent with the various declarations and pronouncements of Christ which we find in the New Testament.

Now it is indisputable that these very words of our Lord, which are so commonly quoted against Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, can be shown even to justify Catholic devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, when more closely examined, in conjunction with other facts which are also recorded by the Evangelists.

But *these other facts admit of no interpretation except the Catholic*, and thus it comes that the surface difficulty of certain passages only lends force, so soon as their real meaning is grasped, to the strength of the positive evidence on behalf of Catholic doctrine concerning our Lady. Indeed, it can be proved that the conception of the Catholic Church concerning the position of the Blessed Virgin in the kingdom of her Son was prefigured and foretold in the sacred Scriptures, not only at the very commencement of the Christian era, but even at the opening of the Biblical narrative itself, in type, promise, and glorious prophecy.

Before proceeding somewhat more closely to

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Weakness of the Negative Argument.

examine the passages which are commonly adduced from the New Testament writings against the *cultus* of the holy Mother of God, we shall be forced at once (if we hold to any Christian dogma whatsoever), to reject as irrelevant the argument drawn from the silence of the Acts of the Apostles and of the Epistles; for exactly the same purely negative argument can be brought against such an essential Christian doctrine as is the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, or such an ancient and widespread Christian practice as is the observance of Sunday. The writer of the Acts of the Apostles was concerned, as he himself tells us, with the public history of the early Church, and into that *public* history the Blessed Virgin did not enter. The various Apostolic Epistles were written, for the most part, in order to deal with certain crises that arose in local churches, or to enforce certain doctrines or aspects of Christianity in opposition to Jews or Judaizers, or to Gnostic heretics, or to Gentile philosophers, and here, again, there is no reason why we should expect references to Mary. The argument, then, from mere silence is clearly without force. Had not a few almost parenthetical verses of the Epistle of St. James been written, such an argument would doubtless have been urged with equal vehemence against the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. In this connection it is not the number of times that a

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True meaning of texts that are sometimes quoted against devotion to our Lady.

thing may be said which really signifies, but the thing itself.

If, then, we turn our attention from the negative to the positive, and consider the passages which are commonly quoted from the Gospels as telling against Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, we shall find that, to one who believes in Jesus Christ, either they prove nothing against Catholicism, or they prove too much.

> "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that Thou hast sucked."
> "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it."

If this implies anything from which Catholics would shrink, it can only be that Mary is not blessed at all.

But the Gospel narrative assures us that her blessedness had already been heralded by Gabriel, aflame with his message caught from the lips of the Eternal. Eager, from the throne of God, he bore the great announcement: "The Lord is with thee. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. Blessed art thou amongst women."

Twice already had the Virgin-Mother been greeted as blessed by her cousin, Elizabeth, when, "filled with the Holy Spirit," "she spake out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art

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thou amongst women; blessed is she that hast believed."

Already, Mary herself had prophesied, "All generations shall call me blessed"[1]—all generations, of whom Elizabeth and the woman from the crowd were but the prototypes.

God cannot contradict the Word of God, nor Scripture give the lie to Scripture.[2]

HOW, then, are we to understand the teaching of Jesus Christ: "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it"?

To Catholics this saying, taken in its literal sense, presents no difficulty, for they do not fail to remember that the Evangelist relates not only that our Lady had been declared blessed by Gabriel and by Elizabeth, but also that she kept all the words of Christ and "pondered these things [that is, weighed them one with another] in her heart."[3]

Her Divine Son is not comparing the blessedness of His Mother Mary with that of any other mother—unique and therefore incomparable must ever be the blessedness of the Mother of the Redeemer—He *is* contrasting the blessed-

[1] Luke i. 42, 48.

[2] "Si Sancto Spiritu benedicta canitur Maria, quomodo eam Salvator negavit?" (Origen, *Homil.* vii. *in St. Lucam*).

[3] Luke ii. 51 and 19.

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ness which is an unmerited privilege with that which comes from meritorious co-operation with His grace. He *is* contrasting the happiness which is natural with that which is moral in its origin.

"Christ filled Mary's mind," writes St. Bernard, "before He found His lodging in her womb, and when He left that womb He did not leave her heart."[1]

"Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it."

None ever "heard the Word of God," none ever "kept the Word of God," as faithfully as did the Virgin-Mother, whose self-surrender stands supreme as the type of all creaturely perfection. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word." "Blessed is she that has believed."

In the well-known Italian version of the Bible by Mgr. Martini, Archbishop of Florence, we find this beautifully expressed:

> ". . . To hear the word is, as it were, to conceive Jesus Christ. To keep the word is, as it were, to give Him birth. The glory of the Virgin, who was made Mother of the uncreated Word, would not have been full and perfect, had not each of

[1] "Nonne qui pomum in manu suâ tenuit dimidiâ die, reliquâ diei parte pomi servabit odorem? . . . Nam et ante mentem replevit quam ventrem; et cum processit ex utero, ab animo non recessit" (*Sermo I., Dom. post Oct. Epiphaniæ*).

these two blessednesses [physical and spiritual] met in her and been in her united."[1]

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Such, surely, is the true meaning of these words of Christ.

The same line of thought may help us to understand that other saying of our Lord: "Who are My mother and My brethren? They who do the will of My Father; they are My mother and My brethren."

No one will imagine that our Lord denied Mary to be His Mother. But He would suggest the mystical truth that they who keep His word and do the will of God not only reproduce His life in their own, and thus bear Him anew, but also that they become near and dear to Him, as are mother and brother and sister. At the same time He wished, doubtless, to enforce the lesson of detachment from earthly ties, even the closest, in obeying the calls of God.

Nor is this any special pleading or shrinking from the full force of the words of Christ; it is merely such a collation of those words with other passages of the Holy Scriptures as is always necessary if we are to understand any writings, whether sacred or profane.

[1] "L' udir la parola è quasi concepir Gesù Cristo; l' osservala è come partorirlo; e la gloria della Vergine fatta Madre della Parola increata non sarebbe stata piena e perfetta, se ambedue queste beatitudini non avesse in se reunite" (see note on Luke xi. 28).

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Analogy from passages urged by Arians against the Divinity of Christ.

HERE, perhaps, it may be well to note that, so far as the sayings of Christ, which we have been considering, present a difficulty to Catholics in the matter of their devotion to our Lady, an analogous and far more formidable difficulty has to be faced by all believers in our Lord's Divinity, in consequence of other words which He is recorded to have uttered.

For example: "The Father is greater than I"; and, again: "Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but God only."

That the primâ facie sense of these words is Unitarian may be freely admitted; but Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, reply that these sayings do not stand alone, but must be considered in the light of the rest of the teaching of Christ. Thus, their minds are prepared for the gloss and explanation of the Creed: "He is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead" (did He not say, "The Father and I are One"?), "but inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood." So, when our Lord said, "Why callest thou Me good? None is good save God only," He did not deny His Godhead, though He might seem to do so. But He would suggest, to whomsoever should address Him as Good Master, the thought: "God alone is essential goodness. Unless thou knowest that I am God" ("Before

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Abraham was *I am*"), "good thou shouldst not call Me." It was a challenge to thought, full of deep meaning for those who, in the aftertime, should confess His Divinity, in union with His Holy Church throughout the world.

It may be noted that our Lord constantly turned away the minds of those with whom He spoke from that which was abstract to that which was concrete, and of personal utility to themselves.

Thus, when challenged as to the great problem of the existence of evil, He declined to be drawn at all into the discussion, but pointed out to those who questioned Him on the subject, that the existence of suffering provides an opportunity for God to do His wonderful works of mercy, and also proves the necessity of all men doing penance, since all are sinners.[1] Again, when asked as to the number of the saved, Christ distinctly refused to answer the question, but enlarged on the importance of making salvation sure for ourselves by walking in the narrow way.[2]

Similarly, when the women of Jerusalem wept over His Passion, He spoke to them with words of solemn warning:

[1] Luke xiii. 1-5; John ix. 3.

[2] *Cf.* Luke xiii. 23, 24, illustrated by Phil. ii. 12 and 2 Peter i. 10.

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> "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children . . . for if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?"[1]

Tears shed even for the sufferings of Christ are useless, unless they spring from sorrow for the sins which caused His bitter Passion. So would our Lord turn the thoughts of the mourning women to that which was of practical import to themselves. This was His invariable custom.

It is not my purpose now to examine the sufficiency of explanations such as the above. I would merely suggest that it does not lie in the power of those who adopt them (as all Christians must needs do), to find fault with the Catholic explanation, running on precisely parallel lines, of the question of Christ: "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?"

When the woman from the crowd cried exultingly, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee," it was most true. Elizabeth, full of the Holy Ghost, had already said the very words. But it would be useless for that woman to acclaim the blessedness of the Mother of Christ, unless, like Mary, she should in her measure and degree hear the Word of God and keep it,

[1] Luke xxiii. 28, 31.

and thus have her share in Mary's higher blessedness.

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In these words of Christ we find a lesson of deepest value, which it behoves us all carefully to ponder.

Christianity and Catholicism ever produce a perfect and harmonious synthesis. The destructive analysis of Rationalism or of Protestantism creates only chaos.

The Marriage at Cana.

THE remaining difficulty in this matter is afforded by the words of our Blessed Lord to His Mother at the marriage of Cana. Some few years ago the present Anglican Bishop of London, when addressing his clergy on the supposed dangers of "Mariolatry,"[1] referred to the petition addressed to the Blessed Virgin in the well-known hymn, *Ave Maris Stella*, "Monstra te esse Matrem," which he translated, "Show thyself His Mother," observing that he could not understand how anyone could pray thus who had reflected on that which St. John tells us that our Lord actually did say to Mary, when she, His Mother, pointed out to Him the need of wine at the marriage feast.

[1] This, it may be observed, is surely a needlessly offensive nickname, unworthy of the Bishop of London, for Catholic devotion to our Lady. It is, or should be, a matter of common knowledge that all Catholics emphatically deny that they give to Mary the worship of *Latria*, due to God only.

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But, as Cardinal Newman has observed, it is very doubtful whether "Monstra te esse Matrem," of which the literal rendering is, "Show that thou art a Mother," should be translated "Show thyself *His* Mother" at all. It seems more probable that the real meaning is, "Show thyself *our* Mother." However this may be, when we follow the bishop's suggestion and consider the prayer in the light of that which happened at Cana, no doubt the first thing which we notice is that our Lord seemed to reject Mary's petition: "Mine hour is not yet come." But it betrays surprising superficiality to forget that, notwithstanding this apparent rejection, as a matter of simple fact Christ did what His Mother asked—"manifested His glory," and worked His first miracle at her request, anticipating His hour *because she asked*.[1] In truth, she then showed herself a mother by her solicitude for the host and hostess in their embarrassment and for their guests as well, and He showed Himself a Son by granting her request.

Once more, the objection proves too much. If it signifies anything that can be of service to

[1] This Protestant objection to Catholic devotion to Mary is as foolish as the common infidel sneer against the morality of the Old Testament by those who quote the sacrifice of Isaac as a piece of divinely sanctioned barbarism. They omit to notice that the sacrifice was, according to the very story itself, supernaturally prevented.

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those who object to what they term "Mariolatry," it means that Christ of set purpose flouted that Blessed Mother, who, in the kindness of her heart and in the fulness of her faith in His divine power, spoke to Him of the trouble which disturbed the serenity of the marriage feast—flouted her, moreover, immediately to grant her prayer. Surely a monstrous conclusion, that may indeed avail for the moment to serve purposes of bitter and reckless controversy—but only as a weapon, certain to break disastrously in the hand of any by whom it may be wielded.

What, then, is the true interpretation of the words of Christ to His Blessed Mother: "What is there between us, O lady? Not yet has Mine hour come."[1]

In the first place, the Catholic will remember that here he stands on holy ground. To one who believes in the Godhead of Jesus Christ, few subjects can well be more fascinating—at the same time, few subjects so ineffable as are the relations of the Creator, now made Man, with the predestined creature, whom He chose, of all others alone, to give Him flesh and blood, and, with a mother's love, to care for Him in the days of the human weakness, which He assumed for love of men.

The immaculate soul of Mary, according to

[1] Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ, γύναι; οὔπω ἥκει ἡ ὥρα μου. See Appended Note C.

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the Catholic conception of her office and position, was to be raised to highest sanctity, and therefore of necessity must she pass along the paths of suffering and mystical desolation. "The sword was to pierce her heart, that out of many hearts thoughts might be revealed,"[1] and this not merely during the agony of the first Good Friday, but during all the years of her motherhood. Mary was to enter, as could no other Saint, into the dereliction of Him who cried in agony upon the Cross: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Bearing this in mind, the Catholic will not be surprised to find that the supernatural training of the Mother of Sorrows in the spiritual life involved an apparent rejection by her Son, which was necessary for her perfection, in order that the (as yet undisclosed) purposes of God might be duly fulfilled within her most blessed soul; even as (if we may dare reverently to write it) it was necessary for Christ Himself that in the last hour of His earthly life He should be apparently rejected by God His Father.[2]

In the aftertime, a woman, a stranger to the Jewish religion—a Canaanite—was to come to Jesus Christ, full of faith, full of goodness of heart, full of confidence in Him, to plead, not for herself, but for her daughter, who was grievously afflicted. If ever an unselfish cry

[1] Luke ii. 35. [2] Matt. xxvii. 46.

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has been heard on earth, it was the cry of the stricken mother:

> "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil."

To this touching prayer Christ "answered not a word." And when His disciples came, asking Him to "send her away, for she crieth after us," our Lord declared that "He was not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." She, however, would not acquiesce in the apparent rejection, and "adored Him, saying, Lord, help me." But Christ, who had at first kept silence and then refused, now went farther and actually reproved His suppliant.

> "It is not fitting to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs."

These words have been so familiar to us, from our childhood upwards, that perhaps it may be difficult to realize how they must have sounded, when first they were uttered, in the ears of her to whom they were spoken. She was called, by implication, "a dog," on the ground that she did not belong to the chosen people—to the true Church of the time. Jesus Christ, we must remember, always intended to grant her request. Who can doubt that it grieved His Sacred Heart so to speak to one coming to

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Him in sorrow, on behalf of a dear child? But had our Lord not thus spoken, she to whom He spoke with such severity never would have had the happiness to utter words, which are surely amongst the most beautiful that have ever fallen from human lips: "Yea, Lord, for even the little dogs do eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters."

And then at last our Lord had the opportunity which never could have been His had He not done violence to Himself—had He not, for the sake of her enormous spiritual profit, seemed to repel one whom He so greatly loved. "Woman," He said, "great is thy faith; be it done unto thee as thou wilt;" and not only do we read that "her daughter was cured from that very hour," but more,—if ever we reach the courts of heaven, we shall gaze with love and veneration on that woman of Canaan, whose praise is in the Gospel, who was commended by our Lord Himself in consequence of her humility, of her confidence in God, of her perseverance in prayer in the face of disappointment and stern refusal.[1]

Such always, as Christians know, are the mysterious ways of God with the souls whom He loves with a special love. "For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."[2] When the heavens

[1] *Cf.* Matt. xv. 22-28. [2] Heb. xii. 6.

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are as brass, then is the hour of our deliverance nigh, if only we will trust Him to the end.

Now, Mary, the Queen of Saints, was to be tried in the same school of suffering as are her children, and in like manner as are others, was she also to be made perfect.

Thus is light shed upon that which passed at Cana immediately before the working of the first miracle of Christ. Eloquent indeed were the words spoken by the woman of Canaan, but there is a silence more eloquent than even the most eloquent words. Such was the silence of the Divine Saviour before His enemies; such, too, was the silence of Mary, Mother of God, in the face of seeming disavowal by her Son. "Yea, Lord," said the Canaanite. But Mary would say nothing further to her Lord at that moment. Her request was made. She had fulfilled her office. She had done her part. It was enough. He had appeared to refuse her; His "hour," He declared, was "not yet come." It was not fitting that one other word should now be said to Jesus Christ. But our Lady knew that her Son would *not* in the event reject His Mother's prayer; therefore did she turn to the waiters, and say to them words which contain, in themselves, all Christian perfection:[1]

[1] How, it may be asked, did the Blessed Virgin know that her Divine Son would work His miracle through the ministry of the waiters? That He might have done so indepen-

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"Whatsoever He sayeth unto you, that do ye."

Those who believe in Jesus Christ can never need any other rule of life than this.

And then our Lord, having by means of refusal and even apparent rejection—for there was no other way so well adapted to His purpose—established and demonstrated for all time the faith, the humility, the wondrous confidence, and the perseverance in prayer of His Blessed Mother, felt Himself free to grant her request. At her prayer He changed the water into wine. At her word He anticipated His hour for the manifestation of His power, because she had asked this at His hands. Thus was the first miracle of our Lord Jesus Christ worked at the intercession of Mary.

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dently of them is, of course, obvious. Was it, as some have thought, that she was possessed of the spirit of prophecy, or did something pass between Jesus and Mary that has been purposely left unrecorded in the Gospel narrative? Is it even beyond the bounds of probability that it was the very faith of Mary which made the miracle humanly possible? We know from our Lord's own words that elsewhere "He could do no mighty work because of their unbelief." Thus Mgr. Martini (*in loco*): "The manner in which Mary spoke to those who waited at table is a proof of the greatness of her faith. She was not offended, nor did she lose heart by reason of the answer of her Son. But full of humble and well-grounded confidence in His love, and hoping in Him, who (if I may say it) seemed to take away all hope, she spoke, she gave orders, as if she had been certain of the miracle which had been denied her."

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"Let us seek for grace," says St. Bernard; "and let us seek grace through Mary, for what she seeks she finds, and can never be disappointed."[1]

And thus, having studied carefully that which happened at Cana of Galilee, we are encouraged still the more to cry out with the Catholic Church:

"Monstra te esse Matrem."

"Show thyself, O Mary, to be indeed a mother—a mother both to us thy children, and of Him, thy Child and thy God, who heard thy prayer at Cana. We too have no wine; pray to Him then for us also, we beseech thee, that He may quickly change the water of our coldness and of our weakness into the fire and strength of His divine love."

"Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus
Tulit esse tuus."

After some such manner will Catholics in every age call on Mary's help. Never can they call in vain.

UP to this point we have dealt merely with the superficial difficulties concerning devotion to the Blessed Virgin that are presented in the Bible. It has been easy to show that these

[1] *Sermo De Nativ. B.V.M.*

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lie only on the surface, and that, when closely examined, the passages in which they occur are in absolute harmony with the Catholic religion.

Positive evidence in New Testament for Catholic devotion to Mary.

We have now to go farther and consider the positive evidence which we find in the Gospels, showing that God intended and foreshadowed from the beginning the confidence that His Church should repose in the intercession of her, who, if Christ be God, is the Mother of God.

We have just weighed the fact recorded by St. John that our Lord worked His first miracle at the prayer of the Blessed Virgin, but there yet remains the even more remarkable testimony of St. Luke.

Especially in St. Luke's Gospel.

In the most beautiful Gospel written by "the beloved physician" so dear to St. Paul, we find recorded the Annunciation to our Lady, the birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem, the worship of the Shepherds, and the Visit to the house of Elizabeth. Now, it should be borne in mind that St. Luke must have received his account of these supernatural events, either directly, or at least indirectly, from Mary, for she alone knew of them with first-hand knowledge.

The Visitation.

We may, in view of this fact, recall the wondrous narrative which we find at the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel, telling us how our Blessed Lady (having learned that her cousin St. Eliza-

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beth was about miraculously to become a mother), with her quick woman's sympathy understanding the special pleasure which at that moment her visit would give her aged relative, set out on the long and difficult journey over the hill country, recking little of the fatigue, full of charity—as we read, "in haste." And when she came to the threshold of the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth, Elizabeth was

> "filled with the Holy Ghost, and cried out with a loud voice, saying: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this unto me, that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me? For, lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed. . . . And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaid: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me . . . and holy is His Name."

Now, when for the first time we dwell in thought upon this beautiful picture, it must strike

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us at once, if we be Christians, as most significant that Elizabeth (under the influence, as we are expressly told, of the Holy Ghost) ascribes the rejoicing of her unborn child to the coming and voice of Mary, for we reflect with wonderment that a greater than Mary was there. As she sped over the hill country in haste, myriads of God's bright spirits bowed down before her, adoring not her, but the Lord whom she, who is the Virgin of virgins, bore within her. Even at that hour our Blessed Lady was the living shrine of the Godhead. Jesus Christ, the everlasting God, deigned to enter the house of Zachary and Elizabeth together with His Mother Mary.

Why, then, are we told that the child, who was destined to be the forerunner of the Messias, rejoiced at the voice of Mary? To this question there is no possible answer excepting that supplied by Catholic theology.

God, and God alone, is the author of every good gift given to men. Here we find the fundamental principle of natural religion.

All good gifts in the supernatural order come through Christ our Saviour, and through Him alone. Such is an elementary doctrine of the Christian revelation.

It was in no way necessary for Elizabeth to be filled by the Holy Ghost to proclaim either of these truths "with a loud voice," for they

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have been in other ways made abundantly clear. But there is another truth—a secondary truth no doubt, but still a truth, which we never could have learned had it not been declared to us in the Holy Scripture—the truth that extraordinary spiritual gifts were given by God, through Jesus Christ, at the sound of Mary's voice. This we never could have even surmised had we not read the inspired words: "*So soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears* the babe leaped in my womb for joy." When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb. The tradition of the Church, handed down by the most ancient Fathers, tells us that at that moment the unborn Baptist was sanctified within his mother's womb. If this be so, then not only did our Lord work His first public miracle in the sphere of sense-perception, at Cana of Galilee, through Mary's prayer, but also, in the house of Elizabeth, the efficacy of His hidden Presence, and the first spiritual grace bestowed by Him after the Incarnation, were manifested at Mary's voice. Thus is our Blessed Lady shown to us in the Gospels from the very beginning as that which she was to be called in the Church of God during the ages that were to come—the Consoler of the Afflicted and the Mother of Divine Grace.

We have left it to the end to consider the direct evidential force of this narrative.

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I may, as I trust, without irreverence, write it down baldly thus:

It must be admitted that in the very beginning of Christianity, before there was any formal recognized *cultus* of Mary, it was put on record[1] that our Lady declared:

1. That she had been visited by an angel.

2. That she held converse with him.

3. That he had told her that the Holy Ghost should overshadow her, and that the Holy One to be born of her should be called the Son of God.

4. That she was directed to "call His Name Jesus."

5. That she bowed in obedience, declaring herself "the handmaid of the Lord."

6. That she became a mother, remaining still a pure virgin.

7. That, having heard from the angel that her aged cousin Elizabeth was also about to become a mother, she determined to visit her.

8. That she accomplished this purpose, and listened to her cousin, who, declaring that her own unborn babe had rejoiced at the sound of her voice, exclaimed aloud: "Whence is this

[1] The attempts that have been made to show that Luke i.-ii. are later additions to the Gospel have admittedly broken down. Thus Harnack, in his *Luke the Physician*, shows from considerations of style, etc., that the authorship is St. Luke's.

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unto me that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me?"

9. That she accepted these words without demur or hesitation, and, having first referred all praise bestowed upon herself to God, openly declared that "all generations" should call her "blessed."

Now, these statements must surely have sounded to anyone not endowed with the light of faith as wildest delirium. If any young woman were to speak thus to-day she would be laughed to scorn. Men would ask contemptuously who was she, that in her case there should be such an unheard-of derogation from the laws of Nature, that Gabriel should visit her from God's throne, that a child should leap within its mother's womb, rejoicing at her salutation—above all, that all generations should call her blessed? It sounds incredible! But in the light of the accomplishment of Mary's prophecy and of Christian history, far more incredible would it be that it should not be true. Ordinarily, angels do not visit the inhabitants of this earth, nor are unborn children gladdened by earthly happenings. Still, such things *may* come to pass, for God is omnipotent. Who can imagine His ways or limit His dealings with the sons and daughters of men? If the Incarnation be a fact, such events, to herald and usher so stupendous and

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mighty a mystery into the world, may even be regarded as antecedently probable.

But that a simple peasant girl should imagine or invent all this, that she should prophesy hĕr future glories, and that her prophecy should be fulfilled in every generation that was to come—this is surely in itself, not only at first sight unthinkable, but also, save to divine power, absolutely impossible.

In the early part of the third century after Christ Origen wrote these noble words:

> "'Whence is this unto me that the Mother of my Lord should come unto me [Elizabeth]?' What good thing have I done that the Mother of my Lord should come unto *me?* Through what sanctity of mine, by what good works, in consequence of what faithfulness of soul, have I deserved this, that the Mother of my Lord should come unto *me?* . . . Would that it might befall me [Origen] to be called by the unbelievers a fool to have believed these things [the mysteries of the Visitation]! The accomplishment of the work shows, and the truth shows, that I have not believed foolishness, but that I have believed wisdom. May that which the unbeliever holds for folly be to me the occasion of salvation. For unless the birth of the Saviour had been full of heavenly blessings, unless it had possessed something which is divine and surpasses all human conceptions (humanitatem hominum supergrediens), never would His teaching have penetrated the world."[1]

Mary called her Child Jesus, for He should "save His people from their sins." Were any

[1] *Homilia* vii. *in S. Lucam.*

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other mother so to name her infant, the world would cry out in derision, and with reason. It would remain an empty, maternal boast. But Mary's Son is hailed to-day as Saviour in every clime by millions of grateful and believing hearts. The Name which she bestowed of old upon her Child in obscure Palestine is now the Name set apart throughout the world for the homage of that Child's worshippers. The Name of Jesus still remains "above every other name that is given unto men." The Agnostic must needs aver that this has to be written off as a merely accidental coincidence—a fact of no account. Can such an attitude be justified at the bar of reason? Does not the fulfilment of Mary's expectation—in itself apart from the truth of Christianity a thing inexplicable—incline us to listen to the voice of Christ her Son?

> "But Jesus cried and said, He that believeth in Me doth not believe in Me, but in Him that sent Me. I, who am Light, have come into the world, that, whosoever believeth in Me may not remain in the darkness."[1]

Consequences involved by rejecting the doctrine of the Incarnation.

THE man who rejects the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ and the Virgin-birth is faced by, amongst others, the following difficulties:

[1] John xii. 44, 46.

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1. Mary's statements are in themselves of such a nature that it must be admitted to be extremely improbable that any healthy minded maiden would ever dream of them, much less, with calm emphasis, declare them to be facts. Moreover, such a declaration is totally repugnant to the modest, retiring, humble character of the Blessed Virgin as it is portrayed in the pages of the New Testament. Our Lady shrank from the triumph of the first Palm Sunday. Love alone brought her to stand in public, unshrinking, beneath the Cross, on the first Good Friday.

2. It is in the highest degree improbable that an unknown Jewish girl, living in despised Nazareth, an obscure town of Palestine, then under foreign domination, should declare without reserve that all generations to the very end of time were to declare her blessed amongst women, passing over the claim of all others of her sex, however gifted, heroic, or illustrious.

3. If the statement as to the future universal acknowledgment of her pre-eminent dignity were not a true prophecy, made under divine impulse, but merely irrational emotion, the result of excitement and illusion—or of wilful deception—of either hysteria or conscious fraud (for there is no other alternative), how account for its fulfilment? So sublime is the chorus of her praises sung by the Eastern and Western

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Fathers of the Church,[1] so loved and cherished is she in every Catholic heart, so enthusiastic are the manifestations of honour and veneration for the Blessed Virgin Mary, that many Protestants have imagined that to her is yielded divine worship. This very accusation, false and calumnious as it is, of itself bears striking testimony to the fulfilment of her prophecy.

But the alternative supposition, blasphemous and intolerably repulsive though it sound to a Christian, must be plainly stated in order to bring out the full force of the argument. If Jesus Christ was born even as other men are born, then His Mother was one who has succeeded in palming off the most horrible imposture[2] con-

[1] *Cf.* Livius, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries, passim.*

[2] There seems to be a shocking innuendo of this kind conveyed by the remarks of the Jews in John viii. 41.

M. Loisy escapes such a conclusion only by putting forward the opinion that the account in St. Matthew and St. Luke of the Virgin-birth and its attendant circumstances was inserted in later ages, after the belief in question had become widespread. It is easy to make, without a tittle of proof, gratuitous assertions such as this, but exceedingly difficult to bring forward any sort of evidence on their behalf beyond *a priori* conclusions as to what is, or rather as to what is not, deemed to be possible with God.

Moreover, this hypothesis, whilst it saves our Lady from the guilt of deliberate imposture, still leaves the question unanswered as to how the belief in the virginal conception spread, if it were not recorded in the beginning. Christians hold that it was accepted on the word of Mary. Those who knew that she was the *Theotokos*

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cerning His birth upon generation after generation of the wisest and greatest the world has ever known, amongst them being many who are accustomed to the most careful sifting of evidence. Nay, more; echoing the eulogy of Elizabeth, they have called her blessed in her faith, on the very ground that there has been "a fulfilment of the things which were spoken to her from the Lord"—"Blessed art thou that hast believed." And according to her own prophecy, they have called her blessed, because "He that is mighty hath done great things" to her. But if these things be not true—if they be not, indeed, the achievements of the Omnipotent, how have they come to pass? To believe that this verification of ancient words has been brought about without the power of God behind it, is against experience, against all analogy, against reason itself.

Some "critics" have, indeed, assigned the *Mag-*

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would gladly believe her testimony. This, at least, is credible. That the story of Mary's virgin child-bearing should have been invented by some early Christians after the death of the only possible witness to the event, should have been believed throughout Christendom, and finally have been fraudulently and successfully interpolated into two of the Gospels—this, to those who are conversant with human nature, must always remain incredible. It is ridiculous to pretend that any such myth as that of Danaë was ever thus widely accepted through many lands and centuries. It is certain that no parallel to the Incarnation of Christ can be found along any such line of investigation.

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nificat to Elizabeth! But common sense tells us that, unless relying on divine support, no sane woman could declare that all future generations would call her blessed. That such a declaration should be accomplished—to this there is nothing in any degree similar in the world's history.

Our Faith, high though it be above reason, teaches us nothing which contradicts our reason, and our experience bears witness to the fulfilling of Mary's prophecy.

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a consequence of belief in the Divinity of her Son, to which it bears its striking witness.

IN the Catholic Church love of the Blessed Virgin has followed close upon the preaching of the Godhead of her Lord and Saviour, who is also her Son. And as the knowledge and love of the Divine Redeemer have spread throughout the whole earth, the splendour of faith in Him has brought out into even clearer and brighter relief the dignity of His Blessed Mother and her claims to the devotion of Christian men.

"De Mariâ nunquam satis!"

So in truth it is in the world-wide household of the Faith. "Of Mary we may never hear enough"; whilst, outside the borders of Catholicism, the ancient separated communities of the East vie one with another in proclaiming the glories of the *Theotokos*. In every Greek or Russian, as in every Catholic church, is to be found her *eikon*, or picture.

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Thrice a day, the wide world over, her children, priest and layman, rich and poor, repeat the angelic salutation.

Every day, priest and monk and nun are bound to recite her *Magnificat*, and thus fulfil her true prophecy, who has dared to say: "All generations shall call me blessed."

In the West the months of May and October are specially dedicated to Mary's honour. During these months especially, day by day, or night by night, her Litany is sung and her Rosary recited during the offering of the Holy Mass, or Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, when it might have been expected that all our thoughts would be centred exclusively upon our God in His veiled Humanity. Yes, but as at Mass we recall Mount Calvary, we think of Mary beneath the Saviour's cross, and as we kneel before our Lord at Benediction, we remember how both the shepherds and the kings found their Lord with her, and with her adored Him: "They found the Child Jesus with Mary, His Mother, and worshipped Him."

Catholics are exhorted constantly in parochial sermons, as in episcopal pastorals and papal encyclicals, to trust to the intercession of the Mother of fair love, the Mother of grace, who is at once the *Virgo Potens*—all powerful with her Son—and the *Virgo Clemens*—all merciful to her poor children upon the earth.

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Testimony of the Old Testament to Mary. The primeval prophecy.

We call on God's dear Mother to come to our succour, and remember the grace and blessing that she brought of old to the house of Zachary, and bethink us of Cana in Galilee.

When we kneel before some image of Mary with her Babe in her arms, the very opening of the Bible story floats before the mind as some mysterious vision, the inward meaning of which has at last been unfolded. For it is not the New Testament alone which reminds us of our Blessed Lady. Throughout the pages of the Old Testament also we may see her prefigured in type and prophecy.

For example, who can forget that after the mysterious fall of the first Adam and the first Eve, when the divine promises of restoration were held out to the human race, the second Adam and the second Eve were already linked together in prophetic word, and it was declared that "the woman" of Holy Scripture should[1]

[1] "*She* shall crush thy head"—so the Vulgate. In the oldest Hebrew MSS. extant we read *It* (the seed of the woman), and in the Septuagint *He*. The true reading cannot even now be regarded as certain, for it must not be forgotten that St. Jerome had access to Hebrew and Greek MSS. more ancient than any which we now possess. In any event, the doctrinal meaning is the same. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman" (so runs the first prophecy of the sacred Scriptures), "between her seed and thy seed. She" (or it) "shall crush thy head." If we read *she* with the Vulgate, we know that the woman of prophecy, the second Eve, crushed the serpent's head only "by her child-bearing," through Christ her Son, our Most Holy Redeemer, the second

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That prophecy fulfilled.

crush the serpent's head: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between her seed and thy seed, and she shall crush thy head." It is the most ancient of all antagonisms. . . . And then in a moment the vast mystical picture drawn for us by the hand of the beloved disciple (as in apocalyptic vision he beheld revealed to his gaze the future of the Church in the long conflict that was to be hers even to the end), floats before our eyes—the panorama of the fulfilment of the primeval prophecy. On the one side is "the woman" who was to bear the man-child that should rule the nations with a rod of iron. (Have we, too, not seen her standing once beneath the tree of the Cross, even as the first Eve stood by the tree of knowledge in the garden of the earthly paradise?) And now by her side are ranged "the rest of her seed," who are pointed out to us as "they who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Against Mary and her Son rages "the great red dragon, the old serpent, who is called Satan."[1]

As we ponder the solemn scene here presented

Adam. If we read *H*, we know that "the Seed of the woman" defeated Satan by being born of the Virgin, who gave her consent to the Incarnation, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word," thus by her obedience repairing the disobedience of our first mother, who led Adam into sin—"*Mutans Hevæ Nomen.*"

[1] Apoc. xii. 1-17.

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to our gaze, we know that our Lady in heaven ever fights for, and with, her children upon the earth.[1] And then perchance we recall the mysterious words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and remember that woman indeed is "saved by the Child-bearing."[2]

In such fulfilment of inspired words we may without doubt recognize the power of God. The honour paid to our Lady at the present day is the verification of the Gospel narrative. It is His work, and it is wonderful in our eyes. He alone could bring to pass that the humble Maid of Nazareth should become the Queen of Prophets, and that all generations should call her blessed. So once again for "the work's sake" we believe, and to God's great Mother we cry, and will ever cry even to the end: "Sancta Maria, tu quæ es Regina Prophetarum, et, secundum verbum tuum, inter omnes mulieres benedicta, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in horâ mortis nostræ. Amen."

[1] Apoc. xii. 9. These words of the Apocalypse refer in their primary sense, as we learn from the interpretation of several of the Fathers, to the Church and her perennial conflict with Satan and the powers of evil. But we also know that it is a recognized principle of interpretation amongst Catholic exegetes that that which, in the mystical passages of Holy Scripture, is predicated of the Church, can also be applied to the Blessed Virgin as the concrete embodiment of that Church; whilst that which is said of the Blessed Virgin can generally be applied to the Church. In this way at Cana, for example, our Lady represented the suppliant Church of every age. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 15.

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Unless Christ be God, the position of His Mother in the Catholic Church is an inexplicable phenomenon.

CATHOLIC devotion to the Blessed Virgin is the living interpretation of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, bestows upon them a unity which otherwise they would lack, and is the key to all mysteries of Biblical type and figure, and of the life of man. Mary's soul was pierced with the sword of sorrow, that the thoughts out of many hearts might be revealed.[1] Once deny that Catholicism is the fulfilment of Scripture, and all becomes a puzzle which refuses to be pieced together. On the other hand, read the Apocalypse in the light of Genesis as the accomplishment of divine prophecy, or read Genesis as illuminated by Bethlehem, by Nazareth, and by Calvary, and devotion to our Lady[2] is seen to be inevitable. No man, be he Protestant or Agnostic, can explain away Mary's unique position in Catholicism

[1] Luke ii. 35.

[2] Thus, St. Bernard, writing of the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, applies it to Mary, who is clothed with Christ, the Sun of Justice, and apostrophizes her thus: "In te [O Beata Virgo] manet sol [Christus] et tu in Eo; et vestis Eum, et vestiris ab Eo. Vestis eum substantiâ carnis, et vestit Ille te gloriâ suæ majestatis. Vestis solem nube, et sole ipsa vestiris."

"In thee [O Blessed Virgin] remaineth the Sun [which is Christ], and thou remainest in Him. Thou dost clothe Him, and by Him art thou clothed. Thou dost clothe Him with the substance of His flesh, and He doth clothe thee with the glory of His Majesty. Thou dost clothe the Sun with a cloud, and with the Sun thyself art clothed."

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without being confronted with that adumbration of her office and majesty in the Bible, which, on any other hypothesis save the Catholic, is absolutely inexplicable.

Unless she be in truth the Mother of God—unless Catholicism be in very truth God's message to man, how is it possible to explain the Biblical account of the Annunciation, of the Visitation, of Cana, and of the reversal on Calvary of Eve's work in Eden, when viewed in the remembrance of the promise, that to the Seed of the Woman it should be given to crush the serpent's head, and of the accomplishment in the Church of all the ages of her prophecy as to the acknowledgment of her blessedness? If we own and hail her as the Blessed One, it is in virtue of her most intimate relation, both spiritual and physical, with her Son, who is our Lord and God,—and then all becomes clear. Plainly it is impossible sufficiently to honour one who is the Virgin Mother of the Maker of heaven and earth, of the Judge of the living and the dead.

But if His Divinity be denied or questioned, no man can account for the historical and actual position of one woman separate from all others, whom multitudes in every generation that have come after her have agreed, rejoicing, to acclaim as blessed amongst women. If her Son were no more than Socrates, His Mother would be no more to us than the mother of Socrates,—

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that mother of unknown name on whom no man now living dwells in thought.

The fact that the Mother of Jesus is enshrined in the hearts of Christians is one chief testimony to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. She is enthroned alone, peerless, near to her Son, occupying a position amongst creatures to which no other woman can ever approach. Her dignity none may share. Neither Agnes, nor Catherine, nor Agatha, nor Elizabeth, nor Teresa, nor any Saint, can be placed alongside of her, whom all the Saints have worshipped as the sinless Mother of their King. Mary is, of all other Marys, of all other women, the Queen. She is Mary Most Holy, Mary Immaculate, Mary, Mother of God. In the hearts and consciences of Catholic humanity she is "clothed" with our Lord, as is no other, and thus is she shown to us if we examine closely our holy Scriptures. She is the antitype whom in the Old Testament we find continually foreshadowed and predicted. In the New Testament she is "Mary, of whom was born Jesus."

Mary closes one epoch. She ushers in another. In her relation to her Child she is the burden of the Prophets of Israel, and of all the Books of Wisdom. She is the Morning Star that heralds the rising of the Sun of Justice, which shall dissipate the mists of the night and give to men the Law of Christ. She is the first-fruits, not

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only of the Passion, but also of the victory and the triumph of her divine Redeemer.

Catholic, world-wide devotion to our Lady is a great witness, that cannot be shaken, to the Godhead of her Son. God, and God alone, could have exalted His Mother from Nazareth to Calvary, from Calvary to heaven, from her life of service and obscurity to be the Queen at the King's right hand, "de stercore erigens pauperem, ut collocet eam cum principibus, cum principibus populi sui"; elevating her, who with deep humility proclaimed herself the handmaid of the Lord, to reign in majesty above the Cherubim and the Seraphim. The more carefully we examine, the more clearly do we recognize the truth that this can only be the doing of the Lord our God, and of Him alone.

"Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." "Let us look carefully." Before our eyes we see that, even as Mary spoke, so it is accomplished.

VII

THE SACRAMENTS OF CONFIRMATION AND EXTREME UNCTION, OF ORDER AND MATRIMONY, TOGETHER WITH THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, BEAR WITNESS TO THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

Various phenomena of Catholicism.

WITH the four Gospels in our hands we have listened to the words of Christ. We have heard His prayer to His Father in heaven that there should be granted to His disciples upon the earth a supernatural unity, like unto the Unity of the Undivided Godhead.

The unity of the Catholic Church in our midst is the visible accomplishment of the Eucharistic petition of our Lord.

We have seen that Christ declared to Simon the fisherman that he should be called a Rock, and that against the Church to be built upon that Rock, the gates of hell should not prevail. He Himself is to be the Door to Life Eternal, and Peter shall hold the keys of heaven.

Of such promises the *soliditas Cathedræ Petri* is to-day the witness and the fulfilment.

We have called to mind those scenes by the Lake of Galilee, where Mary's Son entrusted to

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the men whom He sent forth in His Name, and whom He clothed with His authority, the power to forgive sins, and promised to give them His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink.

The Sacrament of Penance and the Mysteries of the Holy Eucharist prove that His words have borne fruit abundantly.

We have given ear to the statement of His Mother that all generations should call her blessed.

Her own Magnificat, recited daily by at least ten hundred thousand tongues, itself fulfils the splendid prophecy.

Corroborative Evidence for the general argument of this book afforded by--

We have, however, by no means exhausted the illustrations that can be given of this fruitful principle, enabling us from the known to argue to the hitherto unknown, and from the visible effect to deduce the nature of the invisible cause, from which all that we see has sprung. As St. Augustine has expressed it:

> "Whence come those things which thou dost see, excepting from that which thou dost not see? Be not without gratitude to Him, who has given thee to see the [result] from which thou mayest believe that which thou canst not yet see. God has given thee eyes in the body, the power of reasoning in the mind."[1]

This bodily eyesight, this power of reasoning in the mind, has been conferred upon us, not that we may be inobservant and intellectually

[1] *Sermo* cxxvi.

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slothful, but for use. "Look at me carefully," says the Church to you.[1]

Now the Catholic Church claims to possess, entrusted to her keeping, seven sacramental Mysteries, instituted by Christ. At three of these, Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist, we have already "looked" with our eyes, that, through the power of reasoning which we possess, we may arrive at the knowledge of that which we do not yet see.

There remain Confirmation and Extreme Unction, Order and Matrimony.

The Sacrament of Confirmation,

THE Sacrament of Confirmation need not detain us long. It will be enough to point out that, like Baptism, it is a religious rite, and that, like Baptism, it is a religious rite which has persisted through many centuries. A visible fact at the present time, it can be traced by unbroken continuity to the day when Peter and John laid their hands on the inhabitants of Samaria, who, "having received the Word of God," had already been baptized, but stood in need of this further complementary grace.[2] It is highly probable (to put it at the lowest) that references to this Mystery exist in various passages of the Epistles.[3] Its root-idea is to be found in the reception, by means of a visible sign,

[1] *Cf.* p. 99. [2] Acts viii. 15, 17 ; *cf.* xix. 5, 6.
[3] *Cf.* 2 Cor. i. 21, 22 ; Eph. i. 13 ; 1 John ii. 20, 27.

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ordained by our Lord Himself, of the sevenfold gifts of the Paraclete, whom He promised to His servants, that He might "remain with," "and be in them."[1] Thus, for Catholics, faith in this "seal of the Holy Ghost" (as the "character" bestowed by Confirmation is termed) is a result of belief in the promises and in the Divinity of Christ. The permanence of this Sacrament bears witness to the effective continuance of the truth expressed by St. Paul when he wrote to the Galatian Christians: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts."[2]

Inasmuch, however, as there exists no reference, which is explicit and unambiguous, to Confirmation, *quâ talis* in the New Testament writings,[3] its evidential force, in comparison with that of other similar phenomena, is proportionately lessened, at least for those who are not already on other grounds convinced as to the truth of the Catholic Religion and of the Divinity of Christ.

This Sacrament no doubt is "in possession," and therefore the burden of proof falls upon those who deny its identity with the apostolic rite. Nor can the hostile critic suggest a definite point where the link has been broken

[1] *Cf.* John xiv. 17 ; 1 John iv. 13, etc. [2] Gal. iv. 6.

[3] Unless such is to be found in Eph. i. 13 : Ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ Πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ.

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between Confirmation in a modern church and the ceremony of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles. Still, it may be argued that we do not lift up the first chain of the evidence in such a manner as to enable all men to identify, beyond the possibility of cavil, the apostolic laying of hands upon the baptized with the Confirmation scene so often sculptured upon one of the "Seven-Sacrament fonts" of the Middle Ages (still to be seen in East Anglia), or with the rite frequently to be observed at the present day in a Catholic Church at a time of episcopal Visitation.

And by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction,

WHATEVER this line of objection may be worth, it cannot be urged with any show of plausibility in regard to the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Here the evidence to the divine power and permanence inherent in Christian institutions is absolutely unequivocal. In the Epistle of St. James we read directions addressed to any of the Faithful who might be "sick to call to himself the priests of the Church,"[1] that they should "pray over him, having anointed him with oil in the Name of the Lord."

Now, had any stranger to the practices of Christianity—perchance one of its most bitter

[1] Ἀσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν; προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους, κ.τ.λ. (Jas. v. 14).

opponents—become acquainted in the first century with the fact, that, amongst the members of the obscure sect which had recently sprung up in Palestine, such a custom as this was already in force, who can doubt but that he would have straightway predicted its speedy disappearance? "Such an injunction," he would have confidently maintained, "cannot be permanently enforced. That a sick man should send for a priest to pray over him and anoint him with oil—what a ghastly superstition thus to connect the recovery of health, and even forgiveness of offences against God with a visit of priests, accompanied by prayerful anointing with oil from priestly hands. It is too preposterous to demand a moment's consideration! 'Having anointed him with oil, the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and should he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.'[1] The very idea, on the face of it, is childish and worthy only of dark ages! Such a custom may possibly linger on for a few years amongst an ignorant folk, in whose ranks, by their own free admission, there are not yet numbered 'many learned, nor many powerful, nor many nobly born.'[2] But once let enlightenment come, and we shall see. This useless unction by priests cannot long persevere or be practised on a wide scale—least of all by

[1] Jas. v. 15. [2] 1 Cor. i. 26.

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the educated and the thoughtful. Few things can be more certain than that anointing, such as this, is doomed to speedy extinction." And could such a first-century objector have been projected into the world that was to come, so far as to learn something of the advance of physical science, we may imagine him adding, with a smile, that the methods of the bacteriologist must by an inevitable process supplant and leave no room for the superstitions of the monk.

But were the actual future to have been unveiled for that stranger; could he have seen a sick-room in any part of the Catholic world to-day, and have there observed the anxiously expected entry of the priest with the holy oil, and have watched the administration of the Unction commanded by the Apostle of Christ in the beginning, surely his attention must have been arrested by this unexpected fact. Could he have learned that, nineteen hundred years after the death of that Apostle, this anointing, notwithstanding his natural anticipations to the contrary, would still be eagerly desired by men of all degrees of intelligence and education, who can doubt but that his attention would have been riveted by a phenomenon so strange?

In the twentieth century after Christ, the distinguished scientist and the scholar, the professional man and the man of affairs, equally

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with the peasant and the illiterate, have again and again expressed their confidence that the very effects attributed to this Sacrament by St. James—grace for the soul and renewed strength for the body, even complete restoration to former health (if it might so please God)—would be granted to them through the prayer of faith and the holy Unction. Who will fail to see that an open and candid mind would have been influenced by this extraordinary persistence of Christian faith and Sacramental practice, at least so far as to investigate the supernatural claims of "the Lord," in whose Name that mysterious anointing had never ceased to be administered in His Church?

Even before the Day of Pentecost the Apostles—thus we are assured in St. Mark's Gospel[1]—anointed the sick with oil. In this way, the great Sacrament of the Last Anointing was foreshadowed during the days of the public ministry of Christ.

The continuance of this Mystery during the Christian ages is yet another proof of the truth of the claims of Christ our Lord. What other teacher has ever induced—what other teacher could ever induce—men for long centuries after his death to repose their trust in the effects of an anointing, which are believed to be due simply to that Teacher's divine and still living

[1] Mark vi. 13.

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power? Unless Christ be God, Extreme Unction can be nothing more than an idle, somewhat fantastic, ceremony. In that case, it would have vanished off the face of the earth many hundreds of years ago. Its endurance is not merely a proof of its own reality, but remains one witness, amongst so many, to the power of Him under the invocation of whose Name the members of Christ are, for their healing, anointed by His priests.

IF we pass to a consideration of the Sacraments of Order and Matrimony, we shall find that these Mysteries also are believed by Catholics to confer grace, in order that their recipients may be enabled to live as God would have them live, either in the sacerdotal or in the married state.

And by the Sacrament of Holy Order,

We watch an Ordination Service, and see men (ordinarily young men) kneeling before another man, who in a sacred rite lays his hands upon their heads, at the same time uttering words of solemn import. If we ask the inwardness of it all, we shall be told that the one is a Successor of the Apostles, and that the others are seeking at his hands a supernatural gift and character, which the bishop, in virtue of the institution of Christ, is empowered thus to bestow. Our minds, should we be well instructed Catholics, may very probably go back to words written by

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St. Paul to Timothy in the beginning of the Church's history, in which he puts his disciple "in mind to rekindle the grace [or rather "gift" —χάρισμα] of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands."[1] We shall also remember how, at the Last Supper, when (as the Church teaches) the Sacrament of Order was instituted, our Lord said to His Apostles, "Do this [*i.e.*, this sacrificial act][2] in memory of Me," thus constituting the Apostles priests of the New Law.

No man will believe in the supernatural powers of the Christian priesthood, unless he believe in the Divinity of Christ, to whom that priesthood bears unfailing witness throughout the world. Wherever a priest walks the earth, there walks a man, who silently proclaims to all who watch him pass, his unshaken faith that Jesus Christ is the Lord his God. The accredited teachers and priests of non-Christian religions (the fact is of so great importance that we trust we may be permitted to say it once again) represent a book, or a system, or a philosophy, or a code of ethics. The Catholic priest stands above all as a representative on earth for a Person who was born of old in Bethlehem. He, too, Himself once dwelt amongst men in Palestine. He was crucified of old under

[1] 2 Tim. i. 6; *cf.* also 1 Tim. iv. 14.
[2] *Cf.* p. 289 n., *supra.*

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Pontius Pilate, and yet He lives for ever. He alone is the inspiration of the religious efforts of every priest, the key to that priest's whole outlook as to the true significance even of the things of time and sense, whose Word he accepts absolutely as the last word that can be spoken on the true meaning of this present life and its bearing on the life to come.

The Christian layman does not yield one tittle to the priest in his loyal service of Jesus, the Son of Mary. But the priest is, as it were, Christ's standard-bearer, whose duty it is ever to remind men of their allegiance. Where a priest is seen, our Lord can never be altogether out of sight. The King can hardly be forgotten by those who gaze upon His uniform.

No other man has ever commanded such devotion, has ever won such faith, as is the Christian faith in Jesus Christ. We do not believe in our Lord primarily in consequence of His sublime teaching. First, we believe that He is God, and consequently accept His teaching, not merely because of its intrinsic beauty and elevation, but chiefly because He is divine. God can neither deceive those who obey His Word, nor can He be Himself deceived.

To this confident attitude of an unnumbered multitude of men, in every age that has elapsed since our Lord lived and died, there is no parallel in history.

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The very existence of His priests on earth, believing in all that Christ has taught, because He taught it, is an ever-present evidential monument of the power of our Lord to create that faith in Himself which, as the Gospels tell us, He never failed to demand of men. "This is the work of God, to believe in Him whom God hath sent."[1]

BUT if in the Christian Sanctuary priests bear their witness to our Lord, so fathers also, and mothers, bear the same witness in a Christian Family.

And by the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony,

Marriage is a natural contract between man and woman, which has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a Sacrament.[2] "A man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."[3] The first Adam is recorded to have spoken thus, in the beginning of the world's history, concerning the institution of matrimony by God, who is the Author both of Nature and of Nature's due and fitting order. These words were quoted by our Lord, since one purpose of His coming was to repair the divine work, which in some measure had been undone by sin, and by His grace to restore it to an even higher level and dignity. Hallowed by divine power, marriage

[1] John vi. 29.
[2] *Cf.* Eph. v. 32. Τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν.
[3] Gen. ii. 24.

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becomes a perfect antitype of God's union with His Church.[1] He has but one Church as His Holy Bride, which He has loved, for which He has died, for whose sake He spent Himself to he end. Even so, a man can have but one wife, whom he, too, should cherish, on whose behalf he, too, should be glad to sacrifice himself, and, if needs be, to give all that is his. The Church loves and serves, and is true to Jesus Christ her Lord. Here we have a perfect model for the Christian wife.

"That which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."[2] These are the words of Christ; and since thus He spoke, monogamy, carrying with it the indissolubility of marriage, has blessed and fertilized the Christian world.

Wherever Christianity is rejected, there divorce soon will curse the soil and sow the blighting seeds of moral ruin. But in every truly Christian home the Sacrament of Matrimony, with the stability which is due to the bond that death alone can sever, still remains another of the "works" of Christ,—yet another proof of His divine power.

And by the Religious Life,

BUT all men are not called to Holy Matrimony. Therefore married life has its complement in another state, which, though not inaugurated by a Sacrament, is deemed by the

[1] *Cf.* Eph. v. 31, 32. [2] Matt. xix. 5.

Church to be even more perfect than that of the wedded, and which also, in its own place, bears its appropriate witness to the grace of Christ.

> "Who can deny that this life [of virginity] has come down from heaven—a life which we shall scarcely find upon the earth, until God clothed Himself with the members of an earthly body? Then the Virgin conceived in her womb, and the Word was made flesh, in order that flesh might become God."

Thus wrote St. Ambrose in a famous treatise.[1]

If it be objected that Pagan Rome had her vestal virgins, the same great doctor of the Church supplies the answer in a letter to the Emperor Valentinian:

> "It [Paganism] can hardly find seven maidens. This is the whole number. They have been brought together by the desire to drape their filleted heads with rich bands, by the longing to go about in purple-dyed raiment, to be borne magnificently upon litters, and followed by a crowd of slaves; they have been attracted by enormous privileges, by vast rewards, and, finally, by the fact that the limit of their temporary chastity has been fixed. Now turn the eyes of your mind and body elsewhere. Observe the Christian host vowed to virginity. No beautiful adornment decks their heads, but a veil, for this

[1] *De Virginibus*, lib. i., cap. iii., 11. "Quis igitur neget hanc vitam [virginalem] fluxisse de cœlo, quam non facile invenimus in terris, nisi postquam Deus in hæc terreni corporis membra descendit? Tunc in utero Virgo concepit, et Verbum caro factum est, ut Caro fieret Deus."

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world's show quite valueless, though of great account to modesty. By them the soft delights of earthly beauty have not been sought out, but have been surrendered. For them no robes of purple; for them no luxurious relaxation, but the custom of fasting; for them no privileges, no rewards. Everything that is theirs is of such a character that (as you would think) must withdraw them from all zest in their occupations. Yet in the very course of discharging those occupations zest is actually awakened."[1]

"Good Master, what good shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?"

We are now listening to the question, surely always of absorbing, transcendent interest, which, as the Gospel tells us, was once asked by a young man of Jesus Christ our Lord.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

"All these have I kept from my youth up. What is yet wanting to me?"

[1] *Epist.* xviii. 11, 12. "Vix septem Vestales capiuntur puellæ. En totus numerus quem insulæ vittati capitis, purpuratarum vestium murices, pompa lecticæ ministrorum circumfusa comitatu, privilegia maxima, lucra ingentia, præscripta denique pudicitiæ tempora coegerunt. Attollant mentis et corporis oculos. Videant plebem pudoris, populum integritatis, concilium virginitatis. Non vittæ capiti decus, sed ignobile velamen usui, nobile castitati: non exquisita, sed abdicata lenocinia pulchritudinis: non illa purpurarum insignia, non luxus deliciarum, sed usus jejuniorum: non privilegia, non lucra: omnia postremo talia, ut revocari a studio putes, dum exercentur officia. Sed dum exercetur officium, studium provocatur."

"If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor."[1]

Here we find the creative words from which was to spring the fair flower of the Religious Life.

Asceticism there is amongst Mohammedans and amongst Buddhists. Asceticism there was even in the days of ancient Greece, for asceticism is always an imperious necessity to some men weary of the world. But until Christ spoke, no man ever gave up the world who still loved the world. Since Christ has spoken, countless multitudes have turned their backs upon that to which their nature cleaved with an intense affection, by no means in order that they might win for themselves a barren, uncoveted, self-centred isolation, but for the sake of a higher and a deeper love than that of the world which passes away—drawn by love of His Person, for whose sake they fain would strip themselves of all things earthly.

This is the distinctive note of Christian monasticism. It is a renunciation for the sake of another. That other is Christ our Lord.

The "Religious Life" has in Catholicism a technical meaning as applied to men and women who live under a rule approved by the Church and have taken the three life-long vows of

[1] Matt. xix. 16, 21.

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Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience. As those whom God calls to the married state strive in that holy state to live according to His command, so also do they, whom He has called to leave all things and follow Him according to the "Counsels of Perfection," which He has laid upon them, listen to His call. His summons is in each case the inspiration and the trumpet-note, as His grace is the stay and the sheet-anchor of the Christian enterprise.

This sacrifice for the love of Christ has been effected from the first beginnings of Christianity. It is effected to-day, in the full blaze of the twentieth century, by literally hundreds and thousands of men and women of all classes of society, who, of their own free-will, strive to fight and to overcome the lust of the flesh by Chastity, and the lust of the eyes by Poverty, and the pride of life by Religious Obedience.

Men and women, oftentimes young in years and fresh in hope, gladly surrender that which must ever be in itself desirable to mankind—money, which brings rich enjoyment and much power; a home with all its joys; the gratification of that self-will to which every human creature clings most of all,—making, of set purpose and design, a complete surrender—in order that they may be without gold and silver throughout life, that they may be homeless, and that they may obey another. Ask of them, why they have made

a choice so strange, and with one accord they will tell you that it is, that they may become more like unto their Lord and Master, the stainless Virgin's Son; who, being rich, for their sakes became poor, who said of Himself that "the birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes their holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head"; of whom it is written in "the head of the book" that He should do the will of God His Father, who did that will perfectly by obeying man for God's sake, obedient to the edict of the heathen Emperor, and to the Law of Moses, and to His own parents—His own creatures—to Mary and to Joseph, to whom, for thirty years of His three-and-thirty spent on earth, He was "subject,"—obedient, in fine, unto death, even the death of the Cross.[1]

> "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me."

Had not Jesus Christ willed the voluntary abdication of home, and house and property, in the case of those who should believe that they heard His call, urging them to make this sacrifice, a Christian can hardly believe with

[1] "Decet ut plene noveris, virgo, quem diligis" (S. Ambr., *De Virginibus*, lib. i., viii. 46).

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reverence that He, to whom the future lay open as a book, would have used such words as these.

St. John Chrysostom writes as follows of the spread of Christianity, with its supernatural, ascetic spirit:

> "It was a divine power that pervaded [the preaching of the religion and faith of Christ], and caused it to prosper with all conditions of men. For if it had not been so, how could the publican, and the fisherman, and the unlearned, have attained to such philosophy? For things, which they, who are without, have never been able to imagine—no, not in a dream—are by these men, with great certainty, both published and made convincing, and not in their lives only, but even after death . . . and this, too, concerning things far above our nature. For leaving the earth, all their discourse is about the things in heaven, while they bring in unto us another principle of life, another manner of living; wealth and poverty, freedom and slavery, life and death, our world and our polity—are all changed.
>
> "Not like Plato, who composed his impossible (καταγέλαστον) Republic [literally *ridiculous*, not only because it was impossible of realization, but also because—as St. Chrysostom proceeds to show—it was, in certain respects, even opposed to the laws of Nature], or like Zeno, or like anyone else (if such there be), who has written a polity, or framed laws; nor art thou free to urge that it was in consequence of their being trifling and low that [Christian truths] were easily received by all men—nay, for these doctrines [of Christians] are far higher than those [of the Greeks]. As to virginity, they never imagined even the name thereof so much as in a dream, nor yet of voluntary poverty, nor of fasting, nor of any other of those things that are

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high. . . . Yet these high doctrines were both accepted and believed, and they flourish every day and increase; but the others have passed away, and perished, having disappeared more easily than spiders' webs."[1]

Like cobwebs, the empty speculations of men are brushed away and vanish into space. One system of philosophy gives place to another, but the word of Christ abideth for ever, enlightening the minds, and strengthening the wills of His faithful servants. His words bear fruit in enduring works.

For all who have eyes wherewith to see, and ears wherewith to hear, every Religious House that graces the face of Christendom is a silent witness to the divine power of Him, who well-nigh two thousand years after the heaven of heavens received Him out of mortal sight, can still, by the fragrant odours of His garments, draw men and women in their thousands and in their tens of thousands to give up all that fascinates on earth, that they may devote themselves to His Love, whether in contemplation or in active service, through the divine attraction of the words which He spoke of old:

> "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given. . . . He that can take it, let him take it. . . . If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast . . . and

[1] Hom. I. *in Matthæum.*

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> come, follow Me. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you, that you, who have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His Majesty, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."[1]

Were Plato, or Zeno, or Socrates, or Aristotle, or Epicurus, or Descartes, or Hegel, or Kant, or Schopenhauer, or Matthew Arnold, or any other, save Christ thus to speak, his voice would be as that of one crying in the wilderness, for no man would hearken. But Jesus Christ so speaks and so calls in every age, and in no age does He call in vain. They who "can take, still take His Word, to whom it is given of His Father." Thus the Religious Life remains one of His works, a standing monument of Him who has summoned men, each in his own place and according to the measure of his grace and vocation, to take up the Cross and then follow in His footsteps. For never hath He cried, and never shall He cry, in vain.

[1] Matt. xix. 11, 12, 21, 28, 29.

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Where all others have failed and must always fail, He alone has never failed.

Let us quote some old words of the great Athanasius:

St. Athanasius and the evidential force of Christian Virginity.

> "The Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, having for us been made Man, and having caused death to be a thing of no account, and having saved our race from the slavery of corruption, has, amongst all His other gifts, also bestowed this upon us, that we should have, even upon earth, an image of the holiness of the angels—that is to say, virginity. Those, therefore, who have been endowed with this virtue the Catholic Church has been wont to call spouses of Christ. When the unbelievers behold them they marvel at them, as being temples of the Word, for it is certain that nowhere is this solemn and heavenly purpose successfully accomplished save amongst us Christians alone. *Above all, then, is this too a mighty proof that ours assuredly is the true religion.*"[1]

It cannot be repeated too often or too emphatically that we believe in Christianity and in Catholicism, because we believe in Christ. "The Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, having become Man for us, and having caused death to be a thing of no account," reigns supreme over the life His servants live on earth. His life, together with the gifts which He, who is the Son of Man, has bestowed upon

[1] Τὰς γοῦν ταύτην ἐχούσας τὴν ἀρετὴν νύμφας τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλεῖν ἔνωθεν ἡ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία. . . . Μάλιστα γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο μέγα τεκμήριόν ἐστι τοῦ παρ' ἡμῖν εἶναι τὴν ὄντως καὶ ἀληθῆ θεοσέβειαν (*Apologia ad Constantium, Imp.* 33).

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us men—all that by His grace He has effected, whether in the Christian Church, in the Christian home, or in the Christian cloister, remains still "*a mighty proof that ours is assuredly the true religion*," and abides as the great positive answer to all the questionings, doubts, and negations, of the human intellect.

"For the very works' sake
we believe."

VIII

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The Catholic Church bears her credentials on her face.

THE Catholic Church stands in the world, immovable, built on a rock, the persistent, visible, convincing witness to the Divinity of Jesus Christ and to the truth of His revelation. From the Day of Pentecost to the present hour her testimony has never failed. The voice of Pius is the voice of Peter. But Peter, in his turn, represents Another. "Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God," so cries aloud the Vicar of Christ as he guards the city upon the hill. Her white battlements shine through the darkness, pointing to her builder, the Lord in the heavens, who once dwelt upon the earth amidst the sons and daughters of men.

During the twenty centuries of the history of this city, which is the Church of God, there has been nothing of what is merely dramatic or sensational in the development of her growth. All that is essential to her building has sprung from the hand of God, beneath the breath of His Spirit, according to the mind of Christ. The fruits which ripen within her walls have been brought forth in due season, as in the ordered evolution of natural life. The evi-

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And witnesses to Christ.

dences she offers lie open to all, that they who will may test them. The more closely they are examined, the less can they be gainsaid.

The whole fabric of Christianity—its sacramental system, its dogmatic teaching and hierarchical government, as well as its inflexible ethical code—bears testimony to the divine authority and power of Christ. That which is merely human is multiple; that which man has once produced, man may, and will, produce again. But the centuries have passed, and Christianity — the work of Christ — remains alone, unmatched, without a rival.

Mohammed might institute a theocratic polity, and send forth armed hosts to conquer and to devastate in his name; Gautama might sublimate philosophy, and lead men from conceptions that were purely materialistic to some appreciation of the things of the spirit and to a dim yearning after the unseen. Christ alone has known not merely how to enjoin self-restraint, but also has taught generations upon generations of men that through His aid alone may they listen to His voice, and through His aid alone may they keep His Commandments. Christ alone has given to men the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, the efficacious medicine and the heavenly food of their souls; Christ alone has known how to enrich the world with both the Sacrament of Matrimony and the

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Religious Life. All His works bear witness to divine power. How comes it, then, that too many of those, who see before their eyes what Jesus of Nazareth has undeniably brought to pass upon the earth, are able still to reject His claims to their faith and allegiance?

How comes it that often, notwithstanding all the evidence, Christianity is rejected?

How explain the fact that His life, His sublime teaching, His miracles, His death (so different from the death of any other), His resurrection, His Church, the fulfilment of His promises, seem to have no influence upon numbers of men and women round about us? How can they observe unmoved the accomplishment of the *Tu es Petrus*, and remain indifferent to the truth of the *Tu es Christus?*

Sometimes this is through want of due preparation of the heart.

One solution of this enigma which may not be ignored is to be found in the consideration of the *moral* factor in the problem. A man of the world will hardly come to Christ, or will come to Christ to no purpose, unless he be prepared to take up his cross and follow Christ; nor will a busy man turn his mind and heart towards Christianity or Catholicism unless he have at least some interest in spiritual truths, and unless he be prepared to make at least some effort to enter upon the Christian warfare, and to live as Christians and Catholics are exhorted to live. The mere reasonableness of belief will never, by itself alone, move the will to a deliberate act of faith.

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Moreover, before the yoke of the Gospel can be unconditionally accepted, not only the grace of God (which will never fail those who seek) is needed, but also some *pia affectio erga Christum et Fidem*[1]—some good-will, or friendly feeling, towards our Lord and the Faith. When the challenge to bring "the intellect into captivity"[2] to the obedience of Christ rings in the ear, it will be speedily dismissed, if he who hears the call be already determined to "walk no more with Christ," either because His "sayings are hard" or because His precepts are difficult to human nature—in a word, if the sacrifice to be made seems too hard for flesh and blood.

Peter's question, "To whom shall we go?" is a question which calls for no reply from the man who has already made up his mind that he will not go to any, outside himself, whether

[1] "The arguments [for Theism, and *a fortiori* those for Revelation], though convincing, are not resistless. They can be evaded, though not escaped. They have no power to persuade a man against his will—nay, there is required a certain *pia credulitas*, which means, *not* pious credulity, but a loyal readiness to believe, without which they do not avail" (*The Existence of God*, by F. Clarke, S.J., p. 12). Cardinal Newman writes on this subject: "The preliminary *pia affectio*, or *bona voluntas*, does not stand in antagonism or in contrast to Reason, but is a sovereign condition, without which Reason cannot be brought to bear upon the great work in hand" (*Discussions and Arguments*, Longman's edition, p. 251).

[2] 2 Cor. x. 5.

intellectual teacher or ethical master, but rather elects to stand alone, a law unto himself.

"O testimonium animæ naturaliter christianæ." Such is the well-known exclamation of Tertullian.[1] He is therefore consistent with himself when, in his treatise, *De Testimonio Animæ*, he adjures the soul of man to come forward and bear its unbiassed witness to the truth of Christianity.[2]

But Tertullian has also written that, so far as he knows, the soul is not born, but is made, Christian.[3] The great African thinker expressed this profound truth in similar words when he wrote of his conversion from Paganism: "Once we belonged to you [Pagans]. Christians are not born, but made."[4]

It is, indeed, true that the soul, as it comes from God, will welcome the Christian faith, even as the young child will smile, full of joy, at the sunbeam. But if that child is to grow up into a vigorous, active-minded man, there must be education of the faculties (physical and mental) to fit him duly to avail himself of the opportunities and blessings of life.

[1] *Apologia*, cap. xvii.
[2] *De Test. Animæ*, cap. i. "Consiste in medio, anima . . . te compello."
[3] *Ibid.* "Non es, quod sciam, christiana, fieri enim, non nasci soles christiana."
[4] *Apol.*, cap. xviii. "De vestris fuimus; fiunt non nascuntur Christiani."

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Even more necessary is it for *the making* of a Christian that he should practise humility, self-restraint, patience, and other similar virtues. Unless throughout life he put forth efforts of the will to meet and correspond with the supernatural grace of God, spiritually he must starve and die, just as in the natural order food, light, air, will avail nothing one demented, who should deliberately shut himself into a dungeon in the bowels of the earth. "The soul is naturally Christian"; still, Christian men, like healthy men, are not born, but made.

With such considerations, however, as to the moral predispositions required for faith we are not directly concerned in this book.

Quite apart from the preparation of heart and soul and the inclination of the will, which are undoubtedly necessary before a man may take the burden of Christ upon his shoulders, there stands a barrier which has, in the case of many minds, to be boldly faced and surmounted before they can safely and happily adore the Son of Man as their Lord and God.

But often intellectual difficulties constitute a real bar. Some men feel that the Catholic system is too logical.

This obstacle consists in the existence of what are known as *difficulties*.

There are some men who distrust logic, and who are in the habit of protesting to Catholics: "Your system is too logical, too consistent to be true."[1]

[1] Thus Bishop Gore (following Mozley) points out with much ingenuity that the old heresies claimed to be

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It is, indeed, hard to deal with such a mental attitude as this. In these matters of religious inquiry, we can only follow the dictates of reason —unless, indeed, we are to abjure the exercise of ordinary prudence—when searching for the divine teacher, in whose word we may safely repose our faith. No alternative is possible save to follow unreason.

Unreasonableness of such an attitude.

Logic, whether deductive—that is, the correct drawing out of conclusions which are hidden in their premises—or inductive—that is, arriving at sound generalizations from the observation of particular instances—is absolutely necessary if we are to think aright. Who will deny that consistency of thought must be demanded of any system which claims to be the basis of our practical conduct? Once surrender logic and abandon consistency, and then no knowledge, properly so called, will be possible; the mind will acquire simply a confused assortment of facts, derived solely from physical observation and personal experience—a narrow and slippery plank on which to walk through life.

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logical. But this claim was never admitted for a moment by their Catholic adversaries, and would hardly (we imagine) be admitted by Dr. Gore himself. The ancient heretics argued from false or imperfect premises, and therefore necessarily arrived at conclusions which were false or imperfect. It does not follow that Catholics (or other men) are to be distrusted because they argue convincingly from true premises to true conclusions.

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Thus Mr. Birrell does well both to remind us that "the world is governed by logic," and to warn us that "there can be no safety in an illogical position."[1]

We cannot logically reason concerning mysteries taught by a teacher who claims to possess supernatural authority and religious sanction for his teaching, but we can, and we should, strive to bring our reason as well as our other faculties to bear upon that teacher's claim to come forth from God.[2]

On the other hand, of course, it must not be forgotten that the Catholic synthesis, logical and harmonious though it be, does not claim to express or explain the whole truth about God and the things of God. Our Lord, indeed, has left the Deposit of Faith to His Church. Yet, it also remains true that in this life we can only know "in part." Moreover, each dogma that is proposed for our intellectual acceptance, clear-cut in its definition (almost cut-and-dried it may appear at first sight), becomes, when we look at it closely, in order the better to realize its teaching, like some jewelled key, which may open the gate to fields of wondrous beauty, beyond our full apprehension in this world of necessary limitations.

Here, as always, Nature presents us with an

[1] Cf. *Obiter Dicta. The Via Media.*
[2] *Cf.* pp. 22-25, *supra.*

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analogy to the supernatural order. Let us listen to Ruskin:

> "Place an object as close to the eye as you like, there is always something in it which you *cannot* see, excepting in limited and mysterious manner. You can see the texture of a piece of dress, but you cannot see the individual threads which compose it, though they are all felt, and have each of them influence on the eye. Secondly, place an object as far from the eye as you like, and until it becomes a mere spot, there is always something in it that you *can* see, though only in the limited manner above described. . . . [Nature] is always mysterious, but always abundant; you always see *something*, but you never see *all*."[1]

So surely is it also with the dogmas of our religion, revealed by God. They are always, even when seen afar off, clear and distinctive; yet, however closely and carefully we may examine them, they remain inexhaustible in the true inwardness of their significance.

Dread of dialectic.

MORE intelligible and less unsatisfactory than the state of mind of those, who assert that Catholicism is "too logical," is that of many other simpler and more cautious folk, who suspect sophistry in any Catholic argument, or are afraid of being drawn away beneath its cloak by some specious argumentation, so that they may fall into a hidden trap, and thus

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol. i., part ii., sec. 2, chap. v., p. 4.

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Some will say that they cannot listen to argument until difficulties have been removed.

But there are difficultics in all sciences which remain insuperable to the intellect.

become the victims of error under the mask and appearance of truth.

"Yes," they may say; "it all sounds very plausible and attractive, and we are ready to admit that it holds together wonderfully, but there are gigantic difficulties to be overcome, and far from having faced these, you have simply ignored them and left them on one side."

Now, it is undeniable that there are such general difficulties in the way of Christianity as well as of bare Theism. It is also the case that Catholicism has its own special difficulties; and, though these are much less formidable than the others, yet, to some minds, they are harassing enough to demand careful investigation, if the intellect is to rejoice in such secure tranquillity, as is in this world possible, whilst still we live by faith, not yet by sight.

But Cardinal Newman has done enormous service by pointing out that there are residual difficulties in all sciences, even in the most exact —that of pure mathematics[1]—and again that

[1] "And so in mathematical science, as has been often insisted upon, the philosopher has patiently to endure the presence of truths which are not the less true for being irreconcilable with each other. He is told of the existence of an infinite number of curves, which are able to divide a space, into which no straight line, though it be length without breadth, can even enter. He is told, too, of certain lines which approach to each other continually, with a finite distance between them, yet never meet; and these apparent contrarieties he must bear as he best can,

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"ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt."[1] This is one of those illuminating sayings, which, once heard, can never be forgotten, but linger in the memory, for what remains of life. Where there is positive evidence of any truth, difficulties as to that truth need not, and should not, create a single wilful doubt. There are difficulties against the law of gravitation itself which can never be solved, yet no one thinks of doubting the existence of that law.

If, then, even in the physical sciences, there remain after the most patient investigation difficulties which to the intellect seem insuperable, how much more should we expect such in a region where (as Aristotle has once for all taught those who have read the *Nikomachean*

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without attempting to deny the existence of the truths which constitute them in the science in question" (Lectures and Essays on University Subjects—*Christianity and Scientific Investigation*, p. 274).

[1] "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt, as I understand the subject. Difficulty and doubt are incommensurate. There, of course, may be difficulties in the evidence, but I am speaking of difficulties intrinsic to the doctrines or to their compatibility with each other. A man may be annoyed that he cannot work out a mathematical problem, of which the answer is or is not given to him, without doubting that it admits of an answer, or that a particular answer is the true one. Of all points of faith, the being of a God is, to my own apprehension, encompassed with most difficulty, and borne in upon our minds with most power" (*Apologia*, p. 374).

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Ethics) the proofs will, in the very nature of things, not be mathematical, but moral in their character. You cannot prove by Euclid that kangaroos have their habitat in Australia, nor demonstrate by algebra that your father is not a thief. Yet to the man who knows anything of natural history and is conversant from childhood with the character of his father, no conclusion of geometry or algebra can be more certain than those other facts concerning the fauna of the Australian continent and the rectitude of his parent.

Positive proof is all that is necessary; it is often all that, in the nature of the case, can be provided.

When once we have arrived at certainty in our conclusions, we shall do well, provided the processes by which we have worked have been legitimate, to disregard any difficulties that may be raised against those conclusions, not only in speculative matters, but much more in the practical conduct of life. If the difficulty be of such a nature that, through want of sufficient materials or information, we cannot hope in this life adequately to solve it, right reason will bid us wait but not to doubt. Otherwise, the inquiry will be interminable, and in the end we shall not only reject that which we ought to know to be certain, but also we shall have no results excepting unworthy suspicions of the character of our friends, suspicions as to the validity of the human reason—the instrument placed at our disposal by our Creator that we

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may find Him and know Him—suspicions of God Himself.

Difficulties abound on all sides. To be ever considering them, whilst averting the eyes from the positive evidences of truth that lie before us, would be to court disaster and check all enterprise and efficiency. It would be to refuse to recognize, in the dry bough, the sap which, in the spring-time, shall clothe the tree anew, or stubbornly to deny the presence of the tree itself behind the snow which, in winter, may so cover and obscure its branches as to hide them entirely from the view, but which shall surely fall away, dissolved beneath the sunshine, long before there arrives the fulness of the summer heats.

Difficulties to be expected in the sphere of revealed truth more than elsewhere,

But if difficulties are to be found everywhere, in every region of speculative inquiry, and even of practical activity, far from being wondered at, they are especially to be anticipated when religious issues are at stake. And this for several reasons.

in consequence of the obscurity of the subject-matter involved,

1. IN the first place, we have to consider the nature of the subject-matter. In itself it is necessarily most obscure. Were God to be understood in Himself, He would cease to be God.

Professor Fairbairn reminds us that

> "The transcendental cannot be excluded from our view of the universe, but the transcendental

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in philosophy is the correlate of the supernatural in theology."[1]

> "Let reason, then, at her own quarry fly;
> But how can finite grasp infinity?"[2]

asks Dryden whilst discussing the august mystery of transubstantiation.

Such considerations as these prepare our minds for trial, and cause us even to anticipate all those difficulties which are purely intellectual in their character, concerning, for example, the Trinity, or the Incarnation, or the Personality of God, or the Real Presence, or the possibility of the soul being touched by material things, as in the reception of the Sacraments.

The Scholastics, always the great upholders of the efficacy of the human reason within its own sphere, teach us with one accord the Catholic doctrine, affirmed in Holy Scripture[3] and subsequently defined in the Vatican Council, concerning the possibility of arriving at the knowledge of the divine existence, independently of revelation. Moreover, they lay it down that a few revealed truths (St. Thomas says, "a few"; Duns Scotus, fewer than St. Thomas; and the later Scholastics, even fewer than Scotus)[4] may be proved by reason; but they

[1] *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 55.
[2] *The Hind and the Panther*, part i., ll. 104, 105.
[3] *Cf.* Wisd. xiii. 1-9; Rom. i. 20.
[4] *Cf.* Rickaby's *Scholasticism*, in Constable's Series of Philosophies Ancient and Modern, p. 46.

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assert that for the great bulk of our creed we have to rely, as is fitting, upon the Word of God,—*i.e.*, divine revelation—concerning the truth of which reason has already assured us by those proofs, which are known to theologians as the "Motives of Credibility."

and of the nature of faith.

The divine Teacher is shown to us—Christ and His Church. Were we to believe that which we are taught only because we could prove it for ourselves, such belief would cease to be faith, for faith involves accepting a statement on the word of another.[1]

Also in consequence of the Catholic doctrine concerning the fall of man and our intellectual limitations consequent thereon,

2. SO we come to the second consideration—that the very nature of the Christian and Catholic hypothesis leads us antecedently to *expect* difficulties, for that hypothesis insists on the fact that our intellect has been darkened by the sins of our race, and teaches that faith is a necessary part of our probation. Now, probation inevitably involves difficulty, for without difficulty there can be no struggle, and without struggle no "crown of justice"—no crown, that is, which has been merited and won by effort, such as St. Paul so often urges his readers to strive after and to expect. Thus there is no shock, for one who has grasped the first elements of the Christian teaching, in the Apostolic statement that "now we see as

And in consequence of our state of probation.

[1] *Cf.* pp. 26 *et seq.*, *supra.*

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in a glass darkly." It could not be otherwise.

Accordingly, St. Thomas Aquinas writes as follows:

> "Whatever makes against the Faith, either as a consideration in the mind of the believer or in the way of exterior persecution, augments the merit of faith, so far forth as it reveals a will more prompt and firm in the Faith. Therefore, also, the martyrs had greater merit in faith, not seceding from the Faith for persecutions; and, likewise, men of learning have greater merit of faith, not seceding from the Faith for the reasons of philosophers or heretics alleged against it."[1]

Nor is this attitude in any way unreasonable. If my father or my friend is known to me as upright and honourable in his character, it is not only right, but also eminently in accordance with reason, to believe his word, however strong be the difficulties (sometimes apparently insuperable) which may seem to stand against the truth of that word.

Some child is perhaps suddenly assured by its mother that the earth, which seems to be so firmly fixed, is spinning round the sun at a tremendous rate of velocity, and that the sun, which seems clearly to be moving, is approximately at rest, at least in its relation to the earth. No statement can appear to that child more evidently false than the statement of its mother

[1] *Summa Theologica*, 2ª, 2æ, quæstio 2, art. 10, ad 3um.

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concerning the heliocentric theory. The child has never heard of the Copernican system, and would be altogether unable to follow any argument on the subject. One thing alone that child knows—that it can and should trust its mother. Here alone it both feels itself to be, and really is, on safe ground. Therefore, submitting its mind, bending its head to listen or to learn, it securely acquires knowledge, waiting for the fuller time when it shall also understand. Thus also may we act, without shame, submitting ourselves to Christ. One thing we know—that Him we can trust. We are, then, safe in listening, "even as little children," to His teaching, though often it may be high above our comprehension, and, perchance, sometimes "a hard saying," full of difficulty, for we may confidently expect the time when we shall pass, *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*, from childhood to perfect manhood, and shall then see face to face.

As Professor Sanday well and wisely observes:

> "Christians have applied it [faith in the truth of Christianity] consistently for the best part of nineteen centuries on a vast scale. They have applied it, and they have found it work; they have had a worthy theory of life to go upon; they have had a faith which has prompted their actions and sustained them in prosperity and adversity; they have lived with zest and zeal and died in hope; and *they have found the difficulties fall into their place, not as non-existent, but also as a burden not too heavy to bear*, and

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as one that can wait for its ultimate and complete solution."[1]

Because I personally cannot find a solution of some particular difficulty, it would be too preposterous to conclude that a satisfactory solution does not exist!

Men are tested through difficulties.

3. AGAIN, we must always remember that difficulties belong essentially to the divine "economy" in dealing with men, as disclosed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

If Christians sometimes have their difficulties concerning the *Tu es Petrus*, the Jews certainly had theirs concerning the *Tu es Christus*.

When we consider the traditional beliefs and expectations of the Jewish race with regard to the Messiah, we shall see at once how much in the conduct of our Lord must have been naturally strange and offensive to their preconceived views of life and conduct. Nor does He seem to have troubled much to smooth away those difficulties and prejudices.

Dr. Newman wrote, in the eighty-fifth of the *Tracts for the Times:*

> "It is not to be denied that there were, and are, many and real difficulties in the way of the Jews admitting that Jesus Christ is their Messiah. The Old Testament certainly does speak of the Messiah as a temporal monarch and a conqueror of this world. *We* are accus-

[1] *A New Marcion*, p. 15.

> tomed to say that the prophecies must be taken spiritually, and rightly do we say so. True; yet does not this look like an evasion to a Jew?"[1]

Our Lord disappointed those who expected that the Messiah should lead the turbulent spirits of His own people against the foreign legions of Rome. Again, many learned in the law, but ignorant of His birth at Bethlehem, argued that He could not be the Christ, for He was a Galilæan. "Doth the Christ come out of Galilee?" they asked; and to Nicodemus they said with scorn: "Search the Scriptures, and see that out of Galilee a prophet ariseth not."[2] So that the condition of the Jews is described to us in the Gospels as being that of perplexity. They had, indeed, proofs that should have been amply sufficient, and Christ Himself has said that they who did not believe in Him had "no excuse for their sin."[3] But this evidence, superabundant though it was, in no way removed all difficulties from the path of the Jew.

On the contrary, our Lord appears often deliberately to have left the perplexities of His hearers in a very acute condition. Take one example of this out of several that might be instanced,—when Christ said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,"[4] *we* know from the statement of the Evangelist

[1] *Difficulties of Jewish and Christian Faith*, p. 245.
[2] John vii. 41-52. [3] *Ibid.*, xv. 22. [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 19.

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that "He spoke of the Temple of His body,"[1] but to the Jews, before the explanation later on was given, the real meaning could only have been shrouded in obscurity.

No doubt it is true that Christ, when He uttered these difficult words, was dealing with the priests and Pharisees, who, to save their face before the people, and thus divert attention from their own criminal neglect in allowing the Temple to be polluted, demanded a further sign of His divine authority. Hypocrites and malicious unbelievers that they were, they must have known that the swift obedience of the multitude to a young and unknown man was not only a fulfilment of the Baptist's declaration that "His fan is in His hand, and He shall throughly cleanse His floor,"[2] but also in itself a proof that He came from God. To these men, as being in bad faith, our Lord spoke of set purpose enigmatically, imposing a condition that they could not fulfil—"Destroy this Temple"—and at the same time uttering a mysterious prophecy that their present malice would, in fact, lead them on to take His life, and that He would then give to them, and to all, the supreme "sign" of His divine authority by raising from the tomb that Temple of His Body which they had thought to have destroyed.

It is of course the case that the metaphor of a

[1] John ii. 21. [2] Matt. iii. 12.

temple for the human body was one well known to the Jews. Still, it was only after "He was risen again from the dead" that even "His disciples remembered that He had said this, and believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had said."[1]

Or, again, if occasionally some argument from prophecy in support of Revelation may not appear able, at least when looked at alone, to bear the strain placed upon it, or if some deduction on behalf of Catholic doctrine, drawn from a text in Scripture, may not seem altogether adequate for its purpose, we may with advantage recall to mind how our Lord proved the persistence and continuity of life beyond the grave by adducing the fact that Almighty God is spoken of in the Old Testament as "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and also as "the God not of the dead, but of the living." *Therefore* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still *live.* This is the argument and conclusion of Christ, but it is also the very method of inference and collation of various passages one with another which Protestants cannot tolerate when employed by Catholics in support of some Catholic doctrine, such as the Immaculate Conception, or Purgatory, or the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is not apparent on the face of the New Testament Scriptures.

[1] John ii. 22.

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From the whole tenor of the Gospel narrative it is undeniable that it was the invariable custom of Christ, first, *positively* to prove the truth of His claims, and that He was "not of this world,"[1] but then, to leave any difficulty that might arise from His teaching, at least for a time, in its darkness, as a trial for faith.

Again, the difficulties of non-faith are far more formidable than those of faith.

4. THERE remains yet another consideration. By refusal to believe, whether in Theism or in Christianity and Catholicism, because of their inherent difficulties, the Atheist, Agnostic, or Protestant, as the case may be, will only avoid one set of difficulties, to fall into others which are, intrinsically, far more grievous in their character, and admit of much less mitigation.

This, I think, will become evident when we come to face, without shrinking, one by one, the great difficulties in the way of religious belief.

We see this when considering the Catholic doctrine of Eternity.

(*a*) FOR instance, the idea of eternity transcends the power of the human imagination; but if, on this account, the fact of eternity be denied, it becomes necessary mentally to conceive of a moment of time, behind which, and to assume yet another moment, in front of which, there is nothing. Now, here is a concept which is absolutely

[1] John viii. 23.

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unthinkable, and involves a manifest contradiction in terms, since time of its very essence involves succession. If eternity lies outside of time, then time can have a beginning and an end. Eliminate the idea of Eternity, and at once the very idea of Time (that is, of one moment coming after another moment, in its turn to yield place to yet another moment—moment succeeding to moment in unbroken series) becomes an absurdity.

We read in St. John's Gospel that "in the beginning was the Word,"[1] and the same Apostle assures us that Christ, who is the Word, has said: "I am the Beginning."[2] These two sentences are no doubt, each of them, full of difficulty to the limited human understanding, but at least it is clear to the simplest intelligence that without an Eternal there can be no beginning. It is also clear that the Eternal was in the beginning—nay, that the Eternal is Himself the Beginning of all temporal life. Far more reasonable is it, after all, to accept that which is frankly above the powers of the finite mind of man fully to compass, than to be driven into a position which postulates a manifest absurdity. Many truths,

[1] John i. 1.

[2] Apoc. xxi. 6, xxii. 13. *Cf.* Isa. xxxi. 4, xliv. 6, xlviii. 12; Apoc. i. 8, and John viii. 25 (Vulgate). "Dicebant ergo Ei: Tu quis es? Dixit eis Jesus: Principium, qui et loquor vobis."

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confessedly, lie beyond my ken, but nonsense can only remain nonsense to the end.

And of Infinity.

Similarly, to form an adequate conception of the Infinite is altogether beyond our mental capacity. We know better what it is not, than what it is in itself. But reason proves the existence of a First Cause, and tells us that this First Cause is a *necessary*, self-existing Being, incapable *of its very nature* of any change, addition, or diminution, and therefore containing in itself all perfection—in other words, infinite. To accept the Infinite involves, beyond doubt, a difficulty to the imagination, but to deny the Infinite is to deny the evidence of our reason and the validity of axiomatic laws of thought. It is to involve ourselves in a hopeless reversal of the legitimate conclusions of our mental processes in every department of knowledge.

And as to the existence of evil.

(β) OR, again, there are some sensitive hearts which are so distressed at the problem of the existence of evil in its manifold forms, together with its corollary, the dread doctrine of eternal punishment, that they unhesitatingly declare its incompatibility with the goodness of God. Do they pause to reflect that if, in the twilight of our present state, it is hard to reconcile many of the phenomena of life with the Providence of God and with the beneficence of an All-wise Creator, we have

before us only a tiny portion of the facts, which for this reason it is impossible to contemplate, whilst we are yet on earth, in due perspective and proportion?

Moreover, with regard to the question of the existence of moral evil, far harder to account for than that which is merely physical, there are certain truths to be borne in mind which materially lessen the difficulty.

The possibility of sin is one of the consequences of the gift of free-will. If a man in a state of probation be free to choose good, it follows that he must be also free to choose evil, the contrary of good.

> "Where the will has no alternative, its choices can have neither merit nor demerit; where only one path lies before the traveller, error may be impossible, but so is discovery; where there is no vice to allure, there is no virtue to be won. The very notion of a moral nature under a moral law involves, therefore, an order that can be broken."[1]

It is impossible to deny the nobility of the design of our Creator in endowing His rational creatures with the great gift of free choice. He will be served by us, not with any forced obedience, but with the spontaneous homage of a free heart, which is not constrained to love Him, but which voluntarily and gladly puts aside all meaner ends, and calls forth its best

[1] Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 160.

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and highest energies willingly to serve its Lord and Friend.

We must also remember that out of evil God constantly draws good. Thus, out of suffering, and even out of sin, come sympathy, patience, effort, struggle, self-abnegation, humility, devotion, and a thousand other virtues.

St. Augustine, for example, in several passages, shows the advantage that may come even from intellectual revolt against revealed truth, and consequent separation from the Unity of the Church:

> "If there were no pride, there would be no heretics or schismatics; but if there were none such, the truth would be sought with much less eagerness."[1]

And again:

> "Let us make use of heretics, not to approve their errors, but that, maintaining the Catholic doctrine in opposition to their subtleties, we may ourselves be more watchful and cautious, even though we may not be able to win them back to the way of safety."[2]

Once more:

> "This Catholic Church, spread legitimately and widely throughout the world, uses him who does not believe in Christ to pursue her work of evangelization, the heretic to prove her doctrine, the schismatic as an evidence of her persistence, the Jew to show the preparation which was made for her fairer beauty (*ad comparationem pulchritudinis suæ*)."[3]

[1] *De Verâ Religione*, 47. [2] *Ibid.*, 15. [3] *Ibid.*, 10.

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And in a sermon he discourses as follows:

> "When the heretics utter their falsehoods, our little ones are perturbed, but when they are perturbed, they inquire. . . . And so it comes to pass that the heretics, though they speak falsely, in order to lead others into error, are, in fact, of advantage to the setting forth of the truth. For the truth would be sought more carelessly, if it were not contradicted by untruthful adversaries. 'Because it is necessary,' wrote the Apostle, 'that there be heresies.'"[1]

Does not our Faith teach us that sin was the occasion of the Incarnation, of the Passion and Death of our Saviour,—of the supreme exercise of the love of Him who, when He loved His own, loved them even to the end? "O felix culpa," sings the Catholic Church each Holy Saturday—"O felix culpa, quæ talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem."

"To those who love God, He makes all things [even sins] work together with them for good"—such is the teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles.[2] Man has not been allowed to sin, that God might be free to punish, as Calvinists blaspheme, but rather, as the Catholic religion teaches, that He might be able to save and to forgive: "Where sin abounded, there hath grace much more abounded."[3]

[1] *Sermo* li., *De Concordiâ Matt. et Lucæ*, 11.

[2] Rom. viii. 28. All the Greeks, and even St. Augustine, take *συνεργεῖ* in the active sense.

[3] *Cf.* Rom. xi. 32; v. 20.

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The closing lines of the *Golden Legend* recur to the mind:

> "It is Lucifer,
> The son of mystery;
> And since God suffers him to be,
> He, too, is God's minister,
> And labours for some good
> By us not understood."

But no power can so transform good that good may become evil. Good must remain good, triumphantly, for ever. Charity, kindness, unselfishness, self-sacrifice, sweetness, purity—such as these remain invincible.

The problem of evil is, admittedly, one of great difficulty, but the problem of the good which exists all around us is absolutely insoluble, unless we acknowledge a beneficent Creator. It is at least conceivable that, when at length all life is seen as a whole, the difficulty arising from the existence of evil will disappear, whereas, if we deny the goodness and the love of God, the vast amount of virtue in the world becomes an effect without a cause—a contradiction in terms. The existence of evil is a trial to the believer. To the non-Theist, not only the existence of evil, but also the existence of good, must always remain an utterly baffling and hopeless enigma.

To many, if not to most moderns, the greatest obstacle in the way of accepting the Christian doctrine is the teaching of our Lord and of His

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And of the eternal punishment of unrepented sin.

Church as to the fate of the wicked. Nor is it only in these latter days that this difficulty in the way of faith has been felt. It pressed heavily on the Christians of the first centuries. Yet, formidable though it undoubtedly is, its weight is much lessened by the Catholic teaching as to free-will in man and the all-embracing love of Christ.

The Catholic Church has ever emphatically impressed upon her children the great truth that God sincerely wills all men to be saved, although He will not destroy that free-will which He has given those of His creatures whom, for their highest welfare, He has made free agents. He created all men for Himself and for happiness. To save us from the consequences of our sins, He did not shrink from unspeakable suffering and from a cruel death. To every man He gives grace amply sufficient for his salvation, so that if any be lost, it can only be through his own wilful rejection of God's help and through his deliberately tearing himself out of the arms of the Crucified Redeemer.

The doctrine of eternal punishment must never be isolated from other truths of Revelation. Looked at alone, it would convey an entirely erroneous idea of the attributes of God. We must, if we are to be safe, regard it in the light that is shed upon it by other truths, such as the continual, patient striving of the

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Spirit of God with the spirit of man, the almost infinite possibilities of purgatorial purification, and the pleadings of God's grace, even to the very borderland.

"*Inter pontem et fontem stat misericordia Domini.*"

"Betwixt the stirrup and the ground,
Mercy I asked, mercy I found."[1]

Christianity and Catholicism should always be considered as a whole. We must never so think of the Justice of God as to leave out of sight for any single moment the declaration of our Lord that He came "not to condemn the world, but to save the world," and that "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." The existence of hell must ultimately be harmonized with numberless passages in the Holy Scriptures concerning the mercies of God which are over all His works—teaching summarized in the beautiful words of the Book of Wisdom:

> "But Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance. For Thou lovest all

[1] This is quoted by William Camden in his *Remains* (1605) from an epitaph, which probably dates back to Catholic times. It was slightly altered by Johnson in 1783 to—

"Between the stirrup and the ground,
I mercy asked, I mercy found."

things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made: for Thou didst not appoint, or make anything hating it. And how could anything endure, if Thou wouldst not? or be preserved if not called by Thee? But Thou sparest all: because they are Thine, O Lord, who lovest souls." [1]

According to Catholic doctrine, no one can be lost, excepting on account of fully deliberate sin; nor, for every kind of sin, can any soul be lost, but only for that which has been recognized by the sinner at the time of his sinning as grievous in its character—mortal sin, as it is called. To commit a mortal sin, a man must with eyes wide open perpetrate that which he knows full well to be a serious offence against God.

> "Now, mortal sin is the creature's *necessary* ruin and wreck. By mortal sin the creature drives headlong against a fixed law of the universe. . . . The mortal sins of duly instructed Christians are nothing less than the deliberate rejection of the very majesty of the Infinite. Let it be understood that this is the kind of crime for which Holy Scripture and Church teaching announce that 'Hell is prepared from yesterday.'" [2]

A man's sin is proportioned to his knowledge.

[1] Wisd., xi. 24-27.

[2] Isa. xxx. 33. See the article on "Everlasting Punishment" in the *Dublin Review* for Jan.-April, 1881.

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Hence, where there is less knowledge, there is, proportionately, less guilt.

> "It must ever be borne in mind that everlasting punishment is for what St. Thomas calls 'certa malitia' (determined malice). The God of all justice cannot punish with eternal exclusion anything else. He must, and will, make every allowance for antecedent passion, for blindness, for ignorance, for inadvertence. When a human creature, with its eyes open, has turned away from its known last end, and when death comes and finds that habit or 'set' of the heart existing, then and then only is the awful ministry of the never-ending retribution called in."[1]

But, it may perhaps be asked, should not they be listened to who teach that God continues the soul's probation through many æons, or periods of time, after this short life be past? However attractive this opinion may appear at first sight, it can afford no lasting relief to the mind; nor does it provide any solution of the difficulty, since nothing can be urged on its behalf either from revelation or from experience. It depends entirely upon that which ingenious persons have evolved out of their inner consciousness, and is at best an unverified and unverifiable hypothesis, on which some minds, without the guidance of the light of faith, seem to rest contentedly.

This theory involves merely a fresh starting-point after this life is over, and logically yet

[1] *Dublin Article, as above.*

another and another *ad infinitum*, or at least as long as any soul remains obdurate in alienation from the Divine Will.

It would thus remove the force of the great "sanction" for virtue and morality. If there were probations in subsequent æons for all, so that none could be lost in the end, one can well imagine a man under stress of temptation saying to himself, that he would yield to his passions without an effort in this æon, leaving reformation for the second æon; whilst in this second hypothetical period of probation repentance would be again too often, as we may well imagine, postponed to the third, and so on indefinitely. The Christian sanction is contained in such solemn, oft-repeated words as those of the Apostle concerning "the works of the flesh": that "they who do such things shall not enter the kingdom of heaven . . . for he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."[1]

Moreover, after all, we may ask why it should be imagined that God should continue giving opportunities for change of heart in another world, when, during this life, He has given, again and again, sufficient graces, only to see them rejected. How many opportunities are we to suppose that God will give? If He were to

[1] Gal. v. 21; vi. 7, 8. *Cf.* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Eph. v. 5; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9.

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give a hundred thousand in vain, the same question would recur: "Why did He not give ten million?" We must remember also that if the punishment for a life ill-spent is awful and endless, the reward bestowed for a few years' fidelity is unspeakably magnificent. It is not right so to fix one's attention on the endless misery of the wicked as practically to lose sight of the endless and all-surpassing reward of the good.

If it were possible for Nero to turn again to God after this life is over, the state of probation would not be closed by death; therefore it might also be possible for Peter, whom Nero crucified, and for Paul, whom Nero beheaded, or for any Saint in heaven, to turn away to evil—surely an intolerable conclusion. Thus in the end we are driven back upon the old Scripture truth that, as the tree falls, so must it lie for ever.

> "It is no use to insist that a rational creature cannot justly be gifted with heart and feeling, and then sacrificed to the symmetry of a system. The creature is not a victim. The creature chooses freely, and is left to its choice. All through eternity it will never choose anything different."[1]

When we have, perhaps painfully and laboriously, thought it all out, we shall be able to understand something of what Cardinal Newman probably meant in writing that the

[1] *Dublin Article, as above*, p. 142.

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real mystery is not that evil has no end, but that it should ever have a beginning.[1] The difficulty as to the beginning of evil must always remain in the intellect, whereas the difficulty as to the conclusion of evil (once let its commencement be granted) lies to a great extent in the imagination.

Our intellect, when questioned, tells us unhesitatingly that heaven would not be heaven, if man, relying on God's mercy, could defy his Maker, refuse to repent and allow evil in himself to triumph over good, and yet sooner or later enter into unbroken happiness.

Further, we come to see that the infliction of retributive, as distinct from remedial and medicinal punishment, is forbidden to men "first, from the certainty that it will run into excess and become sin; and next, because this office has not been committed to us; and, further, because it is unsuitable to those who are themselves so laden with imperfection and guilt. But what would be a crime in a private man to do is a crime in a magistrate not to have done; still wider is the difference between man and his Maker. Nor must it be forgotten that retributive justice is the very attribute under which God is primarily brought before us in the teaching of our natural conscience."[2]

[1] *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 393, 417.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

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So much is this the case that a philosopher, as hostile to Catholic doctrine on this subject as Dr. Rashdall, writes as follows:

> "Wickedness humbled and subdued, though it be only by external force, is a healthier moral condition than wickedness successful and triumphant."[1]

No man shall suffer in hell save he who has brought hell upon himself by doing deliberately that which separated him from God, and by the persistent refusal to repent. Such a one carries the seeds of misery within his heart which his own hand has planted, and which he has refused to eradicate; for him, since his soul is immortal and therefore his sin will eternally persist, hell (so soon as the period of probation is past) is seen to be inevitable.

A human being must necessarily, throughout life, either grow upwards towards the light, or downwards towards the darkness; but—to quote the words of Father Faber: "As to those who may be lost, I confidently believe that our heavenly Father threw His arms around each created spirit, and looked it full in the face with bright eyes of love, and that of its own deliberate will it would not have Him."[2]

Once more, it is a far greater intellectual difficulty (at least to those who acknowledge freedom of the will) to maintain that God could force a

[1] *The Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. i., p. 294.
[2] *Creator and Creature*, p. 368.

moral, responsible free agent to choose good and to reject evil, than it can be to accept the teaching of Christ concerning the punishment of wilful, persistent sin. As we have already urged, if it be true that a man is in a state of probation during this earthly life, it follows that he must be really able to choose evil and to persevere in evil. An animal never does wrong ethically, since the actions of an animal are so determined that it does this or that, rather than something else, of sheer necessity, For men, free choice exists, as is certain from human experience. Now, to choose evil and to persevere in evil even to death, can only mean alienation from God—in other words, hell.

These considerations are not brought forward as though they removed the whole difficulty with regard to the existence of evil and its dread consequences—for a difficulty completely cleared up ceases to be a "difficulty" at all—but in order to show that the difficulties of "Universalists" on this awful subject are at least as great as, if not greater than, those which exist on the orthodox side.

The only safe course is to rest on the plain teaching of Christ, and to hearken to His merciful warnings. Nothing is more certain than that our Lord would never have given these warnings unless they represent a reality to be avoided,—nothing more certain than that He

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gave them out of love for us and desire for our salvation. As for difficulties, we can trust Him that He will make all things clear, when at length, in His unveiled Presence, faith shall be swallowed up in sight. Meanwhile, we should never forget that in this world we are not conversant with all the conditions and factors of the problem. Deep though the mysteries of life remain, one all-embracing, all-sufficing truth we do, or at least we may, know—that Christ is God; therefore, what He has taught, neither more nor less, do we believe. When all has been said, it remains the case that I believe in eternal punishment, as Christ taught it, simply because Christ taught it, solely on the word of Christ. Than this who would desire to say more? Than this what Christian dare say less? To turn away from Christ is self-sufficiency run mad.

And of the Resurrection of Christ.

(γ) TO take another class of difficulty. There are certain well-known apparent discrepancies in the details of the Scriptural accounts of our Lord's appearances after His Crucifixion. Now, suppose that a man becomes so dissatisfied with the various attempts made by orthodox exegetists to harmonize the Gospel records, as to deny the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, he will soon find himself ensnared by far greater

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difficulties than those from which he has just emerged; but, whereas his old difficulties admit of many possible solutions, his new ones are actually insuperable, so that his last mental state will be far worse and more hopelessly perplexed than was his first.

Early in this book I acknowledged that much of the evidence for the Resurrection of our Lord is of a complicated nature, requiring expert skill to unravel; yet the main lines of proof are exceedingly simple and convincing.

It is admitted by the most sceptical critics that the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans were written by St. Paul. No one thinks that they were composed and published more than thirty years at the very outside after our Lord's death. Now, in each of these Epistles the Resurrection of Christ is taken for granted as the very groundwork of the Apostles' teaching, and as a generally recognized fact. For example, if Christ had not truly risen, how did St. Paul venture to write to the Corinthians that "after that [His burial] He was seen by Kepha, and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, *of whom many remain unto this present*, and many are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles"?[1] By these words we are placed in

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 5-8.

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touch with the immediate witnesses, and in the very presence of those to whom the risen Christ had vouchsafed His appearances. Had not such appearances been notorious, the Apostle of the Gentiles would never have dared thus to write, during the lifetime of many of those who claimed to have seen our Lord after His Resurrection, and could have been cross-examined by the unbeliever. Neither would St. Peter, had any doubt existed on the matter in his mind, have ventured to commence his public preaching by proclaiming the fact of the Resurrection to the Jews who had crucified our Lord;[1] nor would he have insisted upon it in the presence of the authorities and of the people without any threat deterring him, save through absolute conviction as to the truth of what he stated.[2]

For, had the assertion of Christ's Resurrection been false, nothing would have been easier for the enemies of Christ than to produce the Body of the Crucified. They did nothing of the kind, but contented themselves with bribing the soldiers to say, that, while they slept, the disciples came by night and stole Him away, thus producing "sleeping witnesses," and, in default of argument,—cast the Apostles into prison.

The Jewish contention that the Apostles were thieves of the Body of Christ seems now to have

[1] Acts ii. 22, etc.
[2] Acts iii. 15-26; iv. 10-33; v. 30; x. 40, etc.

been generally abandoned. The whole history of the attitude of the disciples after the Crucifixion is enough to prove the hopelessness of any such theory. No reasonable suggestion has ever been proffered as to how His friends could have succeeded in surreptitiously obtaining the Body of Christ (so jealously guarded to prevent the possibility of this very thing), nor has it been explained what they did with the Body after they had secured it. And further, it may be shown that in the whole course of history never have impostors and knaves been found to die on behalf of their impostures and knaveries, as the Apostles, who had nothing earthly to gain, but all to lose, by their profession of faith in Christ, were content to shed their blood on behalf of their faith in their Master risen from the tomb.

The ordinary attitude of the Rationalist to-day, whenever he discusses the evidences of the Resurrection (which we may observe in passing is a matter of rare occurrence, as it seems with the freethinker to be rather a subject to be avoided), is to assert that the witnesses to the fact were not deceivers, but that they were themselves deceived. Thus Strauss and Renan call them visionaries. They tell us that the Apostles were at first bewildered and confused by the death of Christ. Yet they were unable to shake off their belief in Christ as the expected

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Messiah. Hence, in Galilee, where everything reminded them of their Lord, they sought to conciliate their belief that "Christ abideth for ever"[1] and the prophecies of the Old Testament[2] with the events that they had witnessed, and so gradually evolved the idea of His Resurrection from the grave. Their enthusiasm and the excited imagination of women created imaginary visions, which were subsequently transformed into real apparitions of the departed. Thus Renan gravely assures his readers that "heroes do not die." He proceeds to remind us that

> "At the moment when Mohammed expired, Omar issued from the tent, sabre in hand, and declared that he would strike off the head of any man who should dare to say: 'The Prophet is no more.'"

However, unfortunately for the suggested parallelism, heroes *do* die. We grant freely that in certain cases there has been an unwillingness to believe or to admit that the hero is really dead. But this attitude is maintained only for a brief period. Mohammed's death has never been doubted by anyone, nor did his followers ever claim that their prophet had risen from the dead. On that day only when insincere braggadocio and empty pretence can fairly be likened to complete naturalness of demeanour and unchallenged sincerity of pur-

[1] John xii. 34.
[2] *E.g.*, Isa. lxiii. and Ps. xv.

pose, may the behaviour of Omar after the death of Mohammed be placed with justice in the same category as the behaviour of His disciples after the death of Christ.

There is no instance in all history of any religion, excepting the religion which owes its origin to our Lord, depending mainly, or at all, on belief (and reasoned belief) in the life of its Founder continued beyond the grave. The more closely we examine the various hypotheses of Rationalists concerning the Resurrection of Christ, the more clear does it become that they are merely gratuitous assertions — not only contrary to everything which is known of the character of the Apostles, but also resting on no basis of ascertained fact.

For example, in a pretentious work (representative of its class), published within the last three years by the Rationalist Press Association, we are instructed as follows:

> "When Jesus died on the cross the confidence of His followers in Him, the belief that He would restore the kingdom of David, suffered an eclipse. But this was only temporary, and it revived in their breasts when, in Galilee and elsewhere, He appeared to them in their dreams and visions as a heavenly figure transported to heaven like Henoch and Elias."

It matters little to the exuberant imagination of a writer such as this, that in the authentic records there is no suggestion of our Lord

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having manifested Himself to His disciples in "dreams"; neither is it in accordance with truth to assert that He "appeared to them *as a heavenly figure* transported to heaven."

In his account of the Ascension, St. Luke tells us expressly that "Christ departed from them and was carried up to heaven, whilst He blessed them," and that this took place shortly after He had said, "See My hands and feet, that it is I Myself; handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have"; and that, "whilst they wondered with joy," He had eaten "before them."[1] As for visions, a "vision" is not seen by many simultaneously, as in the Upper Chamber, nor even by two together, as by the disciples on the road to Emmaus, much less by "five hundred at once."

It is incredible that those disciples, who during Christ's lifetime had often been rebuked by Him for their slowness of faith, should have believed without reason that He had risen from the grave, had appeared to them and been touched by them, had taken meals with them, and answered their questions; incredible that they should have had the folly to *fancy* that He had, after His death, commissioned them to teach all nations, authorized them to baptize in His Name, empowered them to absolve the sins of their fellow-men, and communicated

[1] Luke xxiv. 36-51; *cf.* Acts i. 9, 10, 11.

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to them matters of the utmost consequence, which they in their turn related to others, and in due time caused to be transcribed in the Gospels. The words of the women seemed to them as an idle tale which they did not believe.[1] They were rebuked for their incredulity by the risen Christ Himself.[2] Even when "they came unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and seeing Him adored, some doubted."[3] When He stood in their presence, and said to them, "Peace be to you; it is I, fear not," they were troubled and affrighted. To convince them, He showed them the wounds in His Body; they saw and felt, yet even then they believed not until He had eaten a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb in their company.[4]

Surely these disciples were not dreamers or the men to imagine visions.

It were easier to hold with the Jews that the Apostles deceived others than with the modern Agnostic that they were themselves deceived. Had they been the victims of hallucinations, it would have been even simpler, than on the crude theft-hypothesis, to confute them once and for all decisively by the production of the Body. For, according to the theory of Strauss and Renan, this must still have re-

[1] Luke xxiv. 11; Mark xv. 11, 13.
[2] Luke xxiv. 25; Mark xvi. 14.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 16, 17. [4] Luke xxiv. 36-43.

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mained in the possession of the chief priests and other foes of Christ. That no attempt was made to end the controversy in the most unanswerable way possible,—that no one ever attempted to produce the Body of Christ,—is, and must always be, an irrefragable proof as to the truth of the statements of those with whom He conversed after His Resurrection from the dead. Had the testimony of the disciples been false, or had they been deluded through imaginary visions, it is obvious that they could, and would, have been silenced at once by the tomb of Jesus being pointed out, still containing the Body of Jesus, or, at least, by its being shown how that Body had been removed from the sepulchre in which, to the knowledge of all, it had been placed after the Crucifixion. Nothing of the sort was attempted, but the witnesses to the Resurrection were—scourged and imprisoned. With the enemies of Jesus Christ violence took the place of either argument or rebutting evidence.

Therefore is it the case that the successive appearances to His disciples, continued for forty days in Jerusalem and Galilee to so many men and women who believed Him dead, remain, together with the empty tomb, the indestructible pillars which sustain for all time belief in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

An effort has sometimes been made to dis-

credit belief in the Resurrection by what is known as "the swoon theory." According to this hypothesis, Christ did not really die, but swooned on the Cross. He recovered from this swoon, and visited His disciples. They were confident that He had really died, and imagined the rest.

However, for most men the mere statement of this theory suffices to cause its rejection.

If Christ had swooned through pain and hunger, is it possible that He should have lived through the night, and how was the stone rolled back from His sepulchre? Above all, it will be seen at once that this monstrous perversion of the facts only transfers the charge of fraud and imposture from the disciples to the Master. There cannot, I believe, be a man alive upon this earth who has read the Gospels and can, in his heart, hold Christ guilty of such conduct as this deception would involve; but if such a person exists, and if he comes across our path in life, we may well call upon him to explain how, after all that had happened, it were possible for Christ to have spent the remainder of His life hidden and unknown.

Further, it may be urged that, if our Lord did not die on the Cross, He must have died later. Where, then, after His death, was His Body laid, and where was His sepulchre? Such questions as these, we may be well assured,

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will wait unanswered to the end; but until some answer be given, vision theory, and swoon theory, and every other theory remain perfectly ineffective against the definite proofs of the Resurrection of Christ—proofs which convinced those living contemporaneously with the event, to whom they were offered at the beginning by eye and ear witnesses, who had themselves been strongly reluctant to believe.

With regard to the Petrine claims.

(δ) AGAIN, to draw another illustration of our principle from a very different class of difficulties. Some years ago it was often urged by Anglican scholars that "the Petrine claims," as they are called, could not be admitted on account of the interpolations (often called "Ultramontane forgeries") in St. Cyprian's treatise, *De Unitate*. Recently, however, it has (as Harnack admits) been proved by Dom John Chapman that these interpolations were not forgeries at all (most assuredly it shows a strange lack of humour to term them "Ultramontane"), but that they were added to the text contemporaneously, in order to accentuate the fact that a local schism in Rome was even worse in its character than a schism in Africa, as being *directly* against the *Cathedra Petri*. Moreover, it has been shown that every one of these interpolations can be paralleled by a similar passage from one of the undoubtedly authentic

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letters of Cyprian. What, then, are we to think of the logic and sense of proportion of any man who should formerly have been deterred by such a difficulty as this, or should be now deterred by any difficulty still existing touching a few (three or four at the most) obscure historical episodes, from submission to the Holy See, leaving himself face to face with the hopeless task of explaining away the whole attitude of Christ to Peter, and of fact crowded upon fact in ecclesiastical history—all testifying to the primacy *jure divino* of the Apostolic See.

That there are, comparatively, so few difficulties (Scriptural or historical) concerning the Papacy—although on other matters of religious faith and daily secular experience difficulties abound in such profusion—has for me been, now for many years, a cause for wonderment.

There will always be some who will swallow a camel and strain out a gnat; but it is a sorry spectacle, and one much to be deprecated.

No difficulty should be regarded in isolation.

MOREOVER, however serious a difficulty may look when isolated, it ceases to be formidable when directed against that which is in itself secure, and known on sufficient, abundant, and independent grounds to be true.

As, then, the Theist will see that there are far greater difficulties involved in the rejection of the evidences for the existence of God than

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Not only with Theism and with Christianity, but also with Catholicism, difficulties of rejection far greater than those of submission.

those presented to his mind by the existence of evil, and as the Christian will recognize the fact that it is folly to reject Christ in consequence of the sternness of His teaching as to wilful, persistent sin, so the Catholic knows that if, as the result of any objections brought against his religion, he were to turn away from Catholicism, he would indeed be sacrificing the substance to the shadow, thus involving himself in a bundle of hopeless contradictions, and this, as a general rule, merely on account of the obscurity of one or other isolated historical incident in the remote past—at Antioch it may be, or, possibly, at Carthage.

ST. AUGUSTINE warned the non-Christians of his day that it was impossible to solve all the difficulties that might occur to the mind, either before submission to the Faith or before death. The following words are worthy of attention in every age:

> "We have answered your difficulties as best we knew how; but if all such difficulties are to be solved before baptism, life will be finished before the journey is made from death to life. For it may be endured that before a man be initiated into the Christian mysteries (*antequam Christianis sacramentis imbuatur*), he ask about the resurrection of the dead. It may perhaps be allowed him to ask why Christ came so late, or a few other great questions, upon which the rest depend. But if he hopes to solve all problems before he become a Christian, he is ignorant

> either of the condition of human nature, or of his own appointed span of years. For there are innumerable questions which cannot be finished before the Faith is accepted, if life is not to be finished without faith."[1]

Since, therefore, we could not hope to deal with them all, we have dealt successively in this chapter with certain crucial samples of difficulties—

(*a*) The idea of Eternity and that of Infinity;

(*β*) The existence of evil and of hell;

(*γ*) Difficulties concerning the Resurrection of Christ;

(*δ*) Difficulties concerning the Papacy.

It will readily be admitted that these are amongst the chief difficulties commonly brought against Christianity and Catholicism. If they should not hinder submission to Christ and to His Church, it is hardly probable that anything else will prove an insurmountable obstacle in the path of a man, who, on independent grounds, is convinced as to the truth of the claims of Christ, the Master, and Peter, the disciple. In all these cases, and in all others that can be brought forward, the difficulties of Theists, Christians, and Catholics are, in sober fact, as a grain of sand is to the mountain, when compared with the difficulties that result from negation.

[1] *Sex quæstiones contra Paganos expositæ. Liber Unus, seu Epistola cii. De Jonâ Prophetâ*, 38.

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So we fall back contentedly on the authority of Christ, and of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which He has left to teach the world.

Difficulties often change in their character with the flow of time,

DIFFICULTIES are constantly changing in their character. The main difficulties of yesterday are seldom the difficulties of to-day, and the difficulties of to-day will scarcely be the difficulties of to-morrow. What troubled the peace of our fathers, often affects us hardly at all, and, that which tries us sorely, will—it may well be—seem of but small consequence to those who shall come after us. But Christ still stands forth—the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. His Gospel does not change. His warnings remain on record for all time. His Church is still built upon a Rock.

And with different types of mind,

Again, it should be remembered that difficulties vary almost indefinitely in their force and character. They range from the confusion of mind in the person who does not know that an "indulgence" is a synonym for "a pardon" of canonical penance due for sin which has already been forgiven, and therefore concerns not the future but the past, not guilt but temporal punishment,—to the agony of spirit endured by the man who, seeing his little children motherless, is thereby tempted to deny the very Fatherhood of God; from the per-

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plexity and pain felt by pious souls nurtured in high Anglicanism when told, before submission to the Church, that Anglican clergymen have been judged by the Holy See (on the facts) to be without valid sacerdotal orders,—to the poignant distress of a great scholar, who may be tortured in mind and heart by some conclusion of the Higher Criticism, which, although it may appear inevitable, he is unable—for the moment at least—to reconcile with the authoritative teaching of the Faith.

The difficulties of one man seldom trouble those of a different temper and type of mind or another degree of education. Theologians see plainly that many things which may much disturb the man without theological training are simply the result of inaccurate information or of inability to weigh one passage of Scripture, or one dogmatic definition of Faith with the truth which balances it, or to compare one historical fact with another; or, even more often, that they arise from sheer ignorance. May not our own personal difficulties spring more or less from the same causes as those of our fellows?

Whereas Catholicism is unchangeable in its great affirmation,

My difficulties are rarely those of my neighbour, but both for him and for me the only solution that will bear analysis is submission to the voice of Christ. This is no counsel of despair. The claims of our Lord shrink from no examination to which they may be subjected.

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No teacher of supernatural truth.

The only synthesis that has endured the test of time and survived the experience of ages is the synthesis of Catholicism.

"Lord, to whom shall I go?" Is it to an impoverished Protestantism in all its vagueness and negations — to the Church called "of England"? What there shall we find but the product of nationalism in religion, doubt and hesitation, a stammering voice and stuttering accents? A distinguished Anglican Bishop has lately lamented that the Church, in which he is an official leader, has "the great fault of not knowing its own mind." What wonder, now that it cares no longer to learn the mind of Peter?

A short time since, whilst giving a mission in a Norfolk country town, I came across an old man who, by religion, was a Muggletonian. He was the pathetic survival of what, as I was informed, had been once a community of respectable size and importance in the place. Shall we then, perhaps, do well to join the religion founded by the brothers Muggleton? Surely these Jacobean cobblers (for such they were) had, after all, as much right to establish a Church as Luther, or Calvin, or as those responsible for the "Elizabethan Settlement."

> "We may seek some heresy or sect—true, we may; but why are they more sure? Are they

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> not a part, while the Church is the whole? Why is the part true, if the whole is not? Why is not that evidence trustworthy for the whole, which is trustworthy for part? . . . If we begin, we must soon make an end. On what consistent principle can I give up part and keep the rest?" [1]

Or shall we turn in despair from modern Protestantism to ancient Buddhism? to the Lama of Thibet? or to Mohammedanism and the Turk? or to the late Mrs. Eddy and her Christian Science? or to the newest drawing-room craze of yesterday? or are we to wait for the revelation which will no doubt be vouchsafed to the world of fashion the day after to-morrow?

Excepting the Catholic Church.

Both conscience and reason provide me with the answer. If I am to find the Teacher for whom my heart yearns and to whom my reason may cleave, to Thee only must I come, O Thou everlasting Truth, and to Thy Holy Church, for none other there is who cries aloud to the children of God in all the lands of the earth, with a voice which never yet has been known to falter,—throughout the long ages proclaiming the same heavenly message, sounding the same call to self-surrender and self-sacrifice; none other who teaches, "not as the scribes, but as having authority," who sets out to prove that her doctrine comes from on high, and who fears not to substantiate her claim at the bar, both

[1] Newman, *Difficulties and Arguments*, p. 252.

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of her past story and of the urgent needs of living men; none other who can work to-day the works of God, giving satisfaction to the mind, peace to the conscience, and rest to the wearied spirit of troubled Man.

> "No; I see a work before me, which professes to be the work of that God whose being and attributes I feel within me to be real. Why should not this great sight be—what it professes to be—His presence? Why should not the Church be divine? The burden of proof surely is on the other side."[1]

Before the august presence of Christ and before the presence of His Church,—faced with His achievements in history and at the present hour, alongside of the works which He has accomplished, in view of His promises which have been fulfilled and of His predictions which have been verified, difficulties and objections, erstwhile so boisterous in the loud ring of their confident defiance, now die away ashamed and silent. Thin and pale, ghost-like, without body or substance (as some shadowy phantom which, when confronted boldly, vanishes from the sight), soon they shall have no reality for those who have persisted in striving steadily to gaze upon the clarity of His doctrine. Insignificant indeed do all such futilities appear when challenged by the majesty of Christ.

Goliath was strong and lusty and fearsome,

[1] Newman, *Difficulties and Arguments*, p. 252.

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until a youth came forth with smooth pebbles out of the brook. The pebbles of Christ the Conqueror are none other than the victorious words which came forth from the brook of His Mouth, when He held converse with His friends in the land of His father David. From the sling of the shepherd sped the stone that gave peace and freedom to God's people. So also shall the adversaries of our Lord fall one by one before the words which He has spoken, and out of the death of His foes shall spring forth life, as of old from the lion, that lay dead before Samson, was given the honey and the honeycomb. There is no sweetness and there is no strength like unto the sweetness and the strength bestowed upon those who have passed, through bitter waters, to the land flowing with milk and honey—granted to all, who in the power of God, have overcome corruption.

Difficulties sometimes disappear even in this world.

And for His servants who have surrendered themselves utterly, in body, soul, and understanding, to the keeping of their Lord, it will not seldom come to pass that all such trials to faith as we have been considering shall be, as it were, burned up in the fires of His love, and lost in the constraining force of His divine appeal, even before the day breaks and all secrets are finally revealed in His unveiled presence.

And if for us, in the Providence of God, it is not thus to be, whilst yet we live in the land of

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our exile, we too, knowing well that patience hath a perfect work, can, with patience, wait until we see Him face to face—*in patriâ.*

They shall certainly vanish when we see clearly face to face.

Then at last, at the brightness of His coming, all difficulties shall fade away, and their place shall know them no more. Just as in the days of earth, when yet we trod

> "The meaningless and doubtful ways,
> That lead to an eternal town,"[1]

the searching wind was wont to drive the dust in clouds before its onward course, and the health-bearing rain to lay it altogether, or, as the mists of the night were scattered and dispersed by the golden rising of the morning sun, when from its own glad heaven it shone anew upon the weary ways of men, so shall it be in the City to which we travel, that hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.[2] In this City, night followeth not upon day, nor cometh darkness after the sunshine.

Jesus Christ alone is Himself their solution.

Scio cui credidi. The Daystar already has appeared in the East. The Lord has visited His people. He is the centre of all mysteries. His passion, His death solve all enigmas. He is the solution of every problem. His words enlighten, His actions illuminate, our earthly path.

[1] *Verses*, by H. Belloc, p. 33. [2] Apoc. xxi. 23.

His Life gives life to those who seek Him. He is the culminating point to which the history that was before Him points, from which dates the history that comes after Him. It is before Christ, or it is after Christ, that human deeds are reckoned. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. No man can, in his heart, rank Mary's Son with other men. For all time He stands apart. His Name is still high above every other name given unto men—the source of all worthy, supernatural inspiration, the supreme motive, and the abiding glory, of all effort enduring to immortality. None but He has dared to say:

> "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you. For Him hath God the Father sealed. I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh unto Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst."

None but one who is God as well as Man could venture to make such a claim as this—none but God could know how thus to speak and be believed.

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He is Man.

CHRIST our Lord has brought heaven to earth, and raised earth to heaven. But now He is one of us. He visits our world. He is the Son of Mary—therefore He is the Son of Man. Was not Joseph His foster-father? Was not Bethlehem His birthplace and Nazareth His home? Did He not weep over Jerusalem? Have we not heard that Lazarus was His friend, and read, even with tears, of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved? Was He not well known in Bethany, where "a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house"? and did He not sit, sad and weary, by the well of Jacob? Has He not cried aloud in the agony of His Spirit in Gethsemane? and did He not die on Calvary? and was He not buried in the sepulchre of the rich man of Arimathea?

He is not only God. He is also truly Man.

Of this at least there can remain in the mind, after reading the Gospel story, no lingering doubt.

But also He is God.

Yet also He is manifestly a visitant from another world to the midst of men. His true home is in "the bosom of His Father," to whom the Angels minister in their heavenly choirs. He is our God. "*Before Abraham was, I am.*" We come back in the end to the Divinity of Christ, before whose majesty all that is merely of this earth earthly shall dwindle and fade

away. No difficulty can be compared for a moment in stress to that which would result from striving to explain away the force of the visible works which He alone amongst men has brought to pass.

At the commencement of this book we cited words of the ancient Fathers of the Church, in which they described the work of the Crucified, as they saw it already accomplished in the yet early days of the Catholic religion.[1] Now, as we draw near to our conclusion, let us quote a passage from a modern writer who, unbelieving himself, has yet known how to imagine and portray a vision of the Christian triumph that was to come, as it might well have appeared to the Apostate Julian shortly before his light went out in death :

"CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS (*pass singing over the plain*).

Doomed is the world's proud cedar-tree,
The axe shall its roots dissever ;
The palm He planted on Calvary,
Blood-watered, shall bloom for ever.

JULIAN (*following them with his eyes*). The Galileans are always singing. Songs about death and wounds and pain. Those women whom I brought with me to tend the sick—they have done us more harm than good. How strange ! Is it not inconceivable, unfathomable, Oribases ? Can you rede me this riddle ?

[1] *Cf.* pp. 46-50, *supra.*

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ORIBASES. What riddle do you mean, my Emperor?

JULIAN. With twelve poor ignorant fishermen, He founded all this.

ORIBASES. Oh, sire, these thoughts exhaust you.

JULIAN. And who has held it together until this day? Women and ignorant people, for the most part.

ORIBASES. Yes, yes, sire; but now the campaign will soon take a happy turn. . . .

JULIAN. And what does the conqueror win? Is it worth while to conquer? What has Alexander of Macedon, what has Julius Cæsar won? Greeks and Romans talk of their renown with cold admiration, while the Other, the Galilean, the son of the carpenter, sits enthroned as the king of love in the warm hearts of men. Where is He now? Has He been at work elsewhere since that happened at Golgotha? I dreamed of Him lately. I dreamed that I had subdued the whole world. I ordained that the memory of the Galilean should be rooted out on earth, and it *was* rooted out. . . . But behold, my Maximus, there came a procession by me. There were soldiers, and judges, and executioners at the head of it, and weeping women followed. And lo! in the midst of the slow-moving array was the Galilean, alive, and bearing a cross on His back. Then I called to Him, and said: 'Whither away, Galilean?' But He turned His face toward me, smiled, and said: 'To the place of the skull.' *Where is He now?* What if that which occurred at Golgotha, near Jerusalem, was but a wayside matter, a thing done, as it were, in passing, in a leisure hour? What if He goes on, and on, and on, and suffers and dies and conquers, again and again, from world to world? To think that century shall follow century, and that in them

all there shall live men knowing that it was I who was vanquished and that He it was who conquered! I *will* not be vanquished! I am young. I am invulnerable—the third Empire is at hand. *(With a great cry.)* There He stands!

MAXIMUS. Who? Where?

JULIAN. Do you not see Him? There, among the trees, wearing a crown, and in a purple robe.

MAXIMUS. 'Tis the moon glimmering on the water.

JULIAN *(going threateningly towards the vision).* Avaunt! Thou art dead! Off with the juggler's cloak, Carpenter's Son! What dost Thou there? At what art Thou hammering?—Ah!" [1]

SHALL we say that one who was no more than the son of Joseph, the carpenter, can have created the Papacy, that a Syrian peasant has caused men for two thousand years to believe that He either retains or pardons their sins, and gives them His flesh to eat, that a visionary mystic in Palestine foresaw and has brought to pass the existing unity of the Catholic Church? Thus to speak is as though one should rest the firmament on a web of gauze, or as if a tortoise could poise the world upon

[1] See Ibsen's *Emperor and Galilean* (English translation), Part ii., pp. 439-457. Sozomen (vi. 2) relates that when once, in the days of Julian the Apostate, a Christian was scoffingly asked what the Carpenter's Son was doing now, the calm answer was returned that He was making a coffin for Julian.

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its back. That hand which alone upholds the universe alone suffices to support the Church of Christ.

No explanation either of the phenomena of sense or of the phenomena of faith is in any way adequate save, for the first, the existence of an all-wise Creator, and, for the second, the Godhead of the Son of Mary. Both Theism and Catholicism are justified by the testimony of urgent facts, concerning which no dispute is possible. In each case, through that which we see, we arrive at the knowledge of that which we do not see. The creation of God in the natural order shows to men the power of their Creator. So also, the creation of Christ in the supernatural order, which is His Church, is due to God alone. The words of Christ remain on record. His works remain on earth. The fulfilment of His words is manifest before our eyes.

For those very works' sake we, who live now, still believe in Him, with a faith that fears not criticism, even as His disciples believed, of old, in the days that are past—the days of His life upon the earth.

IX

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THE Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon, in their letter to Pope St. Leo, not content with declaring that he had been "constituted to all the interpreter of Blessed Peter," wrote that to him "the guardianship of the Vine had been entrusted by the Saviour." Peter, living in his successors, is the guardian of the Vine. Peter holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and on earth, in virtue of his divinely bestowed prerogatives and of his living witness to the Divinity of Christ, alone can solve the spiritual problems which haunt and vex humanity.

The difficulty concerning those who are not able to learn about Christ or the Church.

But there are multitudes who have had no visible means during life of finding either the Vine or its guardian. To many minds this fact constitutes the greatest difficulty in the way of yielding to the authority of the Apostolic See, or even of accepting the claims of our Lord Himself.

The Catholic Church is indeed, to use again the metaphor which we have already so often employed, "written on the face of the sun-illumined earth"; but what is to be said as to the condition of those whom the sun's rays

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do not reach during the term of their earthly pilgrimage? If in truth—thus runs the argument—a revelation has been made to men, is it conceivable that millions of rational beings should have been left, so far, at least, as we can judge, without any opportunity of recognizing its message?

That the question thus raised is serious few will be prepared to deny. However, we must remember that it is entirely *a priori* in its character, and is exclusively concerned with that which *we* might have anticipated as probable on the part of God. Therefore the objection will at once lose much of its force when confronted with the positive evidences on the other side. Ultimately, we are concerned not with that which *we* might have expected God to effect, but with that which it has actually pleased *Him* to bring to pass.

We have to deal, not with conjectures and mere hypotheses, but with facts. Moreover, this trial to faith, grave though it be, is much mitigated by such considerations as the following:

"Salvation is of the Jews."[1] These are the words of Jesus Christ. Yet, unequivocal as they sound, who will believe that our Lord really meant to declare that none, not even the

[1] John iv. 22.

Samaritans, should see the Face of God, but the Jews only?

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God is represented as the Father of all men in the Old Testament

No man who believes in the Sacred Scriptures will deny that God is therein represented to us from the beginning as the Father of every nation under heaven. Job, who belonged to the land of Hus in Edom, outside the covenant, is described in the oldest of all Biblical books as "simple and upright, and fearing God and avoiding evil.[1]" Again, the prophet of the Lord was sent to the Ninevites, exhorting them to repentance, and of "the men of Nineve" we are told that "they feared God."[2] Once more —most remarkable and surprising of all—we read of the Jews writing to the Romans and to "the Spartans and to other places according to the same form."

Now this was the form which they used:

> "We therefore at all times, without ceasing, both in our festivals and other days, wherein it is fitting, remember you in the sacrifices which we offer, and in our observances, *as it is meet and becoming to remember brethren.*"[3]

Clearly, the Jews, whatever their own special privileges, did not consider other nations as outside the mercies of God; on the contrary,

[1] Job i. 1. [2] Jonas iii. 5. [3] 1 Mac. xii. 11.

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and in the New.

they prayed and offered sacrifices on behalf of Gentiles, *sicut decet inter fratres.*

So, analogously, in the Catholic Church of the New Testament we find the doctrine of *implicit* faith, whereby it is held that God, the searcher of the hearts and reins, may often see, in the case of a man of good-will, that he believes *implicitly* mysteries which he does not know *explicitly*, but which are virtually contained in that which he does know and profess, so that, were these further truths to be proposed to his belief, he would accept them with reverence and submission. Thus, for example, the fact of the Redemption is wrapped up in the twin doctrines of the Love of God and the needy sinfulness of man.

Implicit and explicit faith.

In accordance with this principle, Catholics habitually speak of the "Baptism of desire" (*Flaminis*), which is implicit, and of the Baptism of blood (*Sanguinis*), as well as of the Baptism of water (*Fluminis*).

Body and soul of the Church.

Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus.

Nothing can seem more uncompromising than the statement of St. Augustine:

> "No one arrives at salvation and life eternal, unless he have Christ as his head. But no one will be able to have Christ as his head, unless he be a member of His body, which is the Church."[1]

[1] Ad ipsam vero salutem ac vitam æternam nemo pervenit, nisi qui habet caput Christum. Habere autem

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Yet the same great Doctor is equally emphatic in asserting the counterbalancing truth that many Christians who do not belong to the "body" of the Church, seen by men, may belong to her "heart" or "soul," seen by God alone.[1]

We have already quoted the words of St. Optatus concerning the prerogatives bestowed by God upon St. Peter and his successors in the Apostolic See:

> "For a man, who knows, to wander is a sin. Those who do not know may sometimes receive pardon."[2]

"*Sometimes*," that is, whenever—as we may trust in a multitude of cases—"not to know" is, in the Divine sight, not due to serious moral fault.

Accordingly, we are accustomed always to hope and often to say that millions separated from the external unity of the Church may well be *bonâ fide*, in "invincible ignorance" as to the divine claims of Catholicism, and that therefore, in this respect at least, they are surely blameless in the eyes of God.

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caput Christum nemo poterit, nisi qui in ejus corpore fuerit, quod est Ecclesia" (*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, xix. 49).

[1] "Certe manifestum est in ecclesiâ intus et foris, *in corde* non *in corpore* cogitandum, quando-quidem *omnes* qui corde sunt intus, in arcæ unitate per eamdem aquam salvi fiunt" (*De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, lib. v., cap. xxv., 39).

[2] See p. 168, *supra*.

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God judges men according to their conscience.

It is certain, not only from the inferences drawn by natural religion, but also through the emphatic, positive teaching of the Catholic Faith, that the Almighty will judge us according to our conscience. It follows inevitably that, if only a man is true to his conscience, he is safe. God will never seek to reap the harvest, where His hand has not sown the seed.

Christians believe that God is infinitely just as well as merciful. He bestows graces in profusion suitable to each man's needs. To some He gives more, to some less. For star differeth from star. But to each He gives enough. From him to whom much has been entrusted, much shall be asked in return. We Catholics know too well how many are the graces we receive, with which, alas! we fail to correspond. As it is with us, so may it be with others who are not Catholics, or even Christians. They also may "receive the grace of God in vain," and fail to correspond with divine gifts, bestowed upon them by God, in order to lead them to Christ and His Church. And if any souls be left without motions of grace towards Catholicism, or even towards Christianity, still they receive from God in other ways that kind of help which is best for them individually in their circumstances, so that if they are faithful to that which is given to them, they too may safely reach Him in the end.

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The doctrine of good faith.

This doctrine as to the security of those in good faith, though they may be outside the fold of the visible Church, was publicly proclaimed by Pius the Ninth in an Allocution held on December 9, 1854,[1] and will not be questioned by any instructed Catholic.

To be without the Sacrament of Penance is indeed a grievous loss. Yet non-Catholic Christians, inculpably ignorant of this mystery of reconciliation, can more easily obtain forgiveness of their sins than could the Jews of old. And the Jews were the chosen people of God.

Progressive nature of God's dealings with men.

We must always carefully bear in mind the progressive character of the dealings of the Creator with His creatures, whether they be regarded collectively, as belonging to some body politic, or as individuals.[2]

[1] The Pope's words are to be found in Denzinger's *Enchiridion*, sect. 1504, and run as follows: "Nevertheless, it must also be held as a certain truth that they who are ignorant of the true religion, if their ignorance be invincible, are not bound by the guilt of this in the eyes of the Lord." The same Pope, in an Encyclical letter of 1868, wrote as follows: "It is known to us and to you that they who suffer from invincible ignorance about our most holy religion, and who live an honourable and upright life, carefully observing the law of Nature and its commands, imprinted by God on the hearts of all, and are ready to obey God, can, by the operation of the power of divine light and grace, attain eternal life" (*Ibid.*, sect. 1529).

[2] The Law of Moses is represented to us by St. Paul as "the schoolmaster to lead [the Jews] to Christ." Natural

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The fact, moreover, that of all mankind only a minority have so far been given the opportunity for Catholic faith is, after all, in harmony with God's working in Nature. In the world of physical nature the selection of minorities, the fact that

> ". . . of fifty seeds
> She [Nature] often brings but one to bear,"[1]

is one of the most patent phenomena. Among men, again, it is the few who are the rulers, the few who are the wise, the most exceptionally few who are of transcendent genius. In the case of human society, however—in this unlike inanimate Nature—the many are not sacrificed utterly. Rather, they are intended to receive, by means of the more highly favoured, all the good of which they themselves are capable. We need not, then, be surprised to find that God has chosen out of mankind a minority to receive especial spiritual graces, while yet the

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religion, denied to none, is the basis of the supernatural. And even in the household of the Faith the inner, deeper meaning and various implications of Christianity are gradually unfolded to the consciousness not merely of the Catholic Church as a whole, but also to that of each separate individual, as he slowly advances on the paths of sanctity and in the personal experimental knowledge of the mysterious ways of God. Where there is life, there must ever be growth ; where there is death, we find stagnation. This truth, however, in no way conflicts with the absolute finality of the Christian revelation in itself.

[1] Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 55.

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others may all attain to full and unbroken happiness. Again, we know well that many, who in this world's goods are poorest, in the kingdom of heaven are to be found in the highest places. God's dealings with mankind are replete with His divine compensations.

We must, however, be on our guard against imagining either that there exist rational beings incapable of Catholic Faith, or that they are always without fault, or ever without loss, who have failed to recognize the claims of Revelation.

The personal responsibility of each man.

A self-made man, who has not himself enjoyed in his youth the opportunity of a liberal education, will not dream of minimizing his own loss, even though he may have acquired sufficient knowledge to suffice for his absolute necessities. Much less will he deny to his sons advantages which did not fall to his own lot. His intelligence may be admirable, and he may have made an excellent use of all his natural gifts, without training and without reading. But who refuses such advantages as these to those whom he desires to benefit, as for instance, to his own children? More than this, he himself can hardly hope that success will continue to wait on his efforts in life, should he wilfully close his eyes to any fresh avenues of information that may open before him in the future.

Thus, in the supernatural order, Cornelius

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did well, towards the end of his life, to listen to St. Peter, though he had already "pleased God" for many years, before he had even heard the name of "Simon, surnamed Peter, who was lodging in the house of Simon the tanner." Nor would he have continued in the fear and love of God, had he refused, when his time came, to submit to the teaching of the Prince of the Apostles. The fact that his friends and neighbours were ignorant of the truth of the new doctrines would have been no excuse for one who had himself received the heavenly vision. Each man, each woman, must answer for his or her opportunities, alone. The individual is directly responsible for no other. He always remains responsible for himself.

Duty of submitting both the mind to known truth

The truth is clear and unquestionable, that it is as much a duty to bring the mind into obedience to God's revelation whenever and wherever it be recognized, as it always must be a duty to submit the will to any known law of morals. The inculpable ignorance of other men can never excuse from submission those to whom the claims of Christ and of His Church have been sufficiently proposed. As to whether in any given instance this has been the case, God always remains the unseen and only Judge.

and the heart to the moral law.

The moral law does not lose its binding force in consequence of the "intrinsic fragility"

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of many, who, oftentimes, through heredity and environment, find that law most difficult of observance. Nor does the obligation of faith cease, because numbers of men deem it hard to believe. In each case, God will give the necessary grace to those who ask it at His hands. His service demands of man the obedience of the intellect as certainly as it calls for the submission of the will.

Faith cannot be given and withheld at same time. Revelation is a whole.

Moreover, the Faith,—in this resembling the moral law,—must remain one and undivisible. He who breaks only one commandment, in the sphere of conduct, thereby contemns the whole authority of the legislator;[1] similarly, he who wilfully disbelieves one revealed truth, in the sphere of faith, is guilty of rebellion against the whole revelation of God. In this fact we may see the true signification of the word "heresy," which, etymologically, means "picking and choosing."

Faith not an opinion.

It is too often the fashion nowadays to speak as though faith were merely a question of opinion, over which a man has no more control than over the nature of his physical complexion. As one is born dark, another fair, even so—thus runs the fallacious argument—is it with historical and political, or philosophical and theological, "views." One man naturally inclines, as he studies history, to Cavalier,

[1] Jas. ii. 10 *seq.*

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another to Roundhead; one to Tory, another to Whig; one to the White Rose, another to the Red. Again, one student of philosophy is by instinct an Aristotelian, his friend a Platonist. In the same way one is by temperament or inborn sympathy a High Churchman, another possibly a Nonconformist; whilst in the Catholic Church herself, a student of dogmatic theology will, in the various open controversies of the schools, differ from his brother. For example, on the subject of the different "systems of grace," one man may find his opinions instinctively tending in an Augustinian, and perhaps another, on the contrary, in a Molinist direction, and each will know where for him, unless he hold himself in check, there may lurk some danger of losing the proportion of the faith, and erring on this side or that,—of falling either into Calvinism or Pelagianism.

But the Catholic remains secure for the very reason that he may safely speculate and give rein to the natural affinities of his mind, provided he remember that, as Cardinal Newman has demonstrated, opinion ceases where faith begins. When God speaks, "views" vanish into obscurity. They were always tentative, and there can be no room for them in the presence of revelation. Once I recognize the divine Teacher, it becomes my duty to submit to the teaching which I receive from that

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Teacher's lips. True psychology assures me that thus to act is my noblest and highest duty, inasmuch as the mind is the highest and noblest part of a man's whole being.

On the other hand, it was in the very early days of Christianity that an Apostle wrote that the wilful "heretic was condemned by his own judgment."[1]

Far, however, is it from being the case that any man shall be "condemned" in consequence of mistakes for which he is not morally responsible. It is a grotesque misrepresentation for Rationalist writers to suggest (after their common custom) that, according to the Catholic Religion, any shall either be rewarded hereafter for being clever and right in their opinions, or blamed for being stupid and ignorant. When we assert our belief in the revealed propositions of the Creeds (and also in their divine sanctions), it is not, because we know that *we* are right through our own wisdom, but it is, because we do know with divine certainty that *God* speaks the truth when He teaches us through His Church, and commands us to believe the Mysteries of Revelation. So that we are ready to put, if needs be, our own view completely aside, and listen with reasonable submission of the intellect to the Voice of our Creator and Judge. The Almighty demands

[1] Titus iii. 10, 11.

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neither mental agility and correctness of thought, nor any intellectual equipment whatsoever from His creatures, beyond the readiness to make the best use possible of those opportunities, (varying indefinitely with each individual), for the investigation of the Grounds of Faith, which each one may possess. What *is* justly required of us all is, not the undeveloped intelligence, but the moral outlook, of the child. Humility, simplicity, obedience, readiness to learn, and (when necessary) to subordinate our private judgment to the authority provided for us by God—in a word, teachableness of spirit—these are the ethical dispositions asked of us by our Lord. "Unless you will become as little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Such remains for all time the solemn warning of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Birrell confuses Catholic Faith with "opinions."

Notwithstanding this notorious fact as to the intellectual attitude of Catholics towards that which they believe to be the Revelation of God, even an accurate thinker and careful writer like Mr. Birrell is betrayed into terming the Catholic religion "a neat assortment of coherent, interdependent logical opinions."[1]

With such airiness of touch does the magician, by a light wave of the wand, loftily dissolve the ancient Creed of Christendom. But, after all, though grown-up men may be

[1] *Obiter Dicta*, p. 78.

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mystified, only babes should be deceived, by the sleight of hand of the conjurer. Mr. Birrell most certainly would not be wilfully unfair or lend himself to the misrepresentations of the flippant or the sciolist. Indeed, he probably intends to be somewhat complimentary. Yet he must be perfectly well acquainted with the fact that no Catholic can have any "religious opinions" whatever, in the region where the permanent witness and authoritative doctrine of the Church of Christ have, by the divine grace, produced certainty in his mind.[1]

Where I am "taught of God," I cannot "opine." To do so would be an absurdity. I may believe, or I may rebel; I may learn, or, at my own risk, I may refuse belief. My own remains the responsibility. In the presence of that which claims to be divine revelation, I must necessarily either be a critic or a disciple. Once the conditions are fairly stated, this is seen to be involved in the very laws of thought. There is no alternative. It is either rejection or submission.

[1] *Cf.* "From the time that I became a Catholic, of course I have no further history of my religious opinions to narrate. . . . I have been in perfect peace and contentment; I have never had one doubt" (*Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ*, p. 238).

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AGNOSTICISM has nothing new about it, not even its name. St. Peter and St. Paul have both used the very word *ἀγνωσία*, from which Huxley was to derive his English equivalent.[1] Of Agnostics one Apostle has written that their presence at Corinth should be a subject not of acquiescence—still less of satisfaction and pride—but of shame,[2] and the other has roundly called them "foolish men."[3]

The moral duty of faith in Christ,

Faith, not only in God, but also in our Lord Jesus Christ, is represented to us throughout the pages of the New Testament as a moral act, worthy of approbation; unbelief in Him, refusal to accept His teaching, as immoral, and, consequently, as deserving of condemnation.

and in His Church.

Nor is it only our Lord Himself who claims our allegiance. He warns us solemnly that refusal to listen to those whom He sends is not merely to despise Him, but to despise God, His Father. We are commanded by Him to

[1] "I took thought and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of 'Agnostic.' It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the 'Gnostic' of Church history, who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant" (Huxley's *Essays upon some Controversial Questions*, p. 276).

[2] Ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ Θεοῦ τινὲς ἔχουσι· πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λέγω (1 Cor. xv. 34).

[3] Τὴν τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνωσίαν (1 Pet. ii. 15). Thus also in the LXX. we read (Wisd. xiii. 1) Μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει, οἷς παρῆν Θεοῦ ἀγνωσία.

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"hear the Church,"[1] and this under pain of being treated as heathens and publicans—in plain words, as outcasts. Nothing can be more distinct than this, nothing more peremptory.

Christian doctrines come from an external Teacher.

Accordingly, the intellectual demand made upon mankind by Christianity must always remain an external and a personal one, delivered to men and women still in the flesh, not "as from the scribes," but "with authority," not by a book which each man may interpret according

[1] "And if he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen (Gentile) and the publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 17, 18). Mr. Stone, a classical scholar of deserved repute, having in a recent pamphlet cited the first of these verses, proceeds to comment upon them as follows: "Here surely we are still farther removed from the spirit of Jesus. Can we conceive Him as setting up an ecclesiastical authority to which all disciples are to be referred? . . . If Jesus spoke the words quoted above, He must have meant not the Jewish Sanhedrin, which afterwards condemned Him, but He must be supposed to have provided for the future government of a society of which only a small nucleus existed. . . . How anyone can suppose that these words fell from the lips of Jesus passes comprehension. But they are found in all the great manuscripts." Mr. Stone does not hesitate to declare that even "such testimony" (*i.e.*, of the manuscripts) is not "irrefragable." It will be noticed that once again we here come across *a priori* reasoning as to what the critic should expect Jesus to have said, overturning the positive evidence as to what He actually did say (*cf. Tu es Petrus*, by Rev. E. D. Stone, p. 8).

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to his own view, nor by an inanimate system, but by a living Teacher.

In the beginning, this solemn teaching was first delivered by Christ Himself, then, in His Name, by His Apostles,—mortal men imposing the obligation and the obedience of faith upon their fellow-men; subsequently, in every age, by the Apostolic Church, teaching through her accredited ministers, claiming to be the Prophet of God, the organ and home of the Spirit of Truth,—the Paraclete, who was "sent" by our Lord, according to His promise, after His Ascension.

Os Domini locutum est ("It is the mouth of the Lord that has spoken").[1] This must always be the only adequate, as it is the supreme and the decisive, motive for the submission of the intellect to the word and revelation of God.

"I believe," says the most ancient Creed of Christendom, first, "*in one God the Father Almighty*," then, "*in Jesus Christ His Son*," next, "*in the Holy Ghost*," and, finally, "*in one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church.*"

This is the logical sequence of ideas. But that which comes last in the order of thought, and also (as regards the Church) last in the order of time, generally comes first in the divine method of imparting religious truth.

[1] Isa. lviii. 14.

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We cannot think of God the Son—*quâ* Son—begotten of His Father from all ages, until we have thought first of the Everlasting Father; nevertheless, it is through Jesus Christ alone that men may know the Father, even as He would be known.[1] We profess our faith in the eternal Word made-Man before we declare belief in the uncreated Spirit, but it is by the Holy Ghost alone that confession can be made with the lips unto salvation that Mary's Son is our Lord and Saviour.[2] We think of the undivided Trinity before we reflect upon His Church; first, we postulate God, afterwards the Church of God; still, it is through the Church on earth that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are known, adored, and glorified.

Baptismal creed in the Testament of our Lord.

In "the Testament of our Lord" (A.D. 350) there is a description of the ceremonies of Baptism, in which we are told that "the Presbyter, laying a hand on the head of the catechumen, asks him, 'Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?' and, receiving the answer, 'I believe,' dips him the first time; he then asks concerning the second part of the Apostles' Creed (an older form of the version we still have), and dips him the second time; then 'Dost thou also believe in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Church?' and dips him the third time. After this, the candi-

[1] *Cf.* John i. 18. [2] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 3.

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date is anointed by the Presbyter with the second oil—that of thanksgiving—and they all go into the church for Confirmation."[1] Here we see a striking illustration of the primitive conjunction of the Holy Church with the Holy Ghost.

The Catholic Church witnesses to Christ in every age.

Catholics do not believe in Christ because they believe in the Church; rather they believe in the Church because they believe in Christ.

Still, living, as we do, nineteen hundred years after His sojourn on earth, we can hardly know our Lord, save through the witness of that Society which has been with Him from the beginning. We have neither with our own eyes seen Him, nor with our own ears have we heard His voice; nor have we handled with our hands the Lord who is the very Word of Life,[2] as did they who dwelt with Him in Palestine, who were His chosen friends and companions, who followed His footsteps in Galilee and Samaria, who mended their nets, listening the while to His words on the shore, or fished from the same boat with Him on Gennesareth's lake.

In Europe to-day—in England—we can learn His full message only by means of the Church which He Himself instituted, and has left on earth to be His witness, which sprang from His

[1] *Cf. Recent Discoveries Illustrating Early Christian Life and Worship*, by Arthur John Maclean, p. 64.
[2] *Cf.* 1 John i. 1.

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opened Side, and was baptized with the Baptism of His Spirit on the Pentecostal morn—the Church—that regal Church which, in the morning of her high enterprise, one of her children, —eagerly scanning from his Alexandrian watch-tower the course of the world's progress,—proclaimed to be "quickened by the Son of God,"[1] and again "to rule over all the rest" (over those even who bowed not the knee before her majesty), and already "to reign together with Christ,"[2] subjugating all that is false and creeping and evil—for must not the very first rays of the sunshine lord it, in triumph, over the darkness, however reluctant?—the ever-living Church of the Living God, which, having once been "wrapped up in the law of Moses, as by the leaves of a fig-tree," has now burst forth, to enlighten the Gentiles and all who sit in the shadow,—that she, who is the Beloved of the Lord of Heaven, may gladden the hearts of them that dwell for a time upon the earth, refreshing the souls of men, even as the vineyards of God, which, for the bodily needs of His children, He has filled with the shoots of His vines, give forth, without fail, their ripe fruit, in due

[1] Origen, *Cont. Cels.*, vi. 48 : *Σῶμα Χριστοῦ φασιν εἶναι οἱ θεῖοι λόγοι, ὑπὸ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ψυχούμενον, τὴν πᾶσαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαν.*

[2] *Ibid.*, *Selecta in Psalm* xxix. 8 : *Κρατεῖ δὲ ἡ ἐκκλησία βασιλεύουσα τῶν λοιπῶν ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ Χριστῷ συμβασιλεύουσα.*

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season. "Vinea enim Domini Sabaoth domus Israel est, et domus Juda dilecta novella."[1]

The Gospel records of themselves cannot suffice. They speak, it is true, of the Institution by Christ of a Church, against which He promised that the gates of hell should not prevail, and they bear their testimony to His covenant that He would be with that Church to the end, and to His promise that He would send His Spirit to guide her into all truth; but these sacred writings, written for believers, clearly presuppose knowledge of revealed truth on the part of those who read them, as already existing and accepted.

The Bible, apart from the Church that guards and guarantees the Bible, of itself can never answer the questions which it raises. The New Testament tells us, indeed, much of the past, of transcendent interest, concerning the life and death of Christ; but, having been written nearly two thousand years ago, it is impossible that it should deal directly with all the problems of the present.

Let us listen once more to the great Augustine.

This the teaching of St. Augustine.

Won from Manichæan subtleties to the simplicity that is in Christ, become now as a little child, recognizing the absolute necessity of authority in religion, St. Augustine did

[1] Isa. v. 7 (Vetus Itala). *Cf.* Origen, *In Cantic. Cant.*, Lib. IV., 88.

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not hesitate to avow in well-known words—words that, assuredly, have lost none of their impressiveness during the fifteen hundred years which have since elapsed—that he could not believe the Gospel itself, unless moved thereto by the authority of the Catholic Church.[1]

On the other hand, the Bible, illustrated by the living Church, of whose beginning the Bible treats, stands in a very different position from the same Book in isolation from the history of Christianity. Thus regarded, its testimony must ever be of the highest moment.[2]

[1] "Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me Catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas . . . quâ infirmatâ jam nec Evangelio credere potero" (*Contra Epistolam Fundamenti*, v.).

[2] The earliest Gospel embodied the genuine traditions concerning our Lord's life, circulating amongst Christians, of whom comparatively few had been eyewitnesses of the events recorded. Indeed, it represents the voice of the Apostolic Church. At the present day it is hardly necessary—so well are the facts now known—to insist upon the truth (shamefully obscured for the first three hundred years after the Reformation) of the jealous care with which the Church guarded and treasured the Bible during the Middle Ages as the most precious of all books. But if any man needs ocular evidence on this point, it will be provided him by a walk through the room of illuminated manuscripts at the British Museum. There he will find gathered together valuable Scriptures from many different countries, written and illuminated by monks and nuns in many different centuries before the discovery of printing. A glance at any one of them is enough to show the care and reverence of the Ancient Church for the written Word of God, and the love for the Bible, inspired by old Catholic devotion.

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Those who witnessed the miracles of Christ were led by those miracles to believe in Him and in the truth of His predictions concerning His Church. We, who see those predictions fulfilled, are thereby strengthened to believe in the divine works of miracle, which we have not seen.

It is the old argument of St. Augustine which we have already so often presented to our readers. Perhaps we may be permitted one last quotation from the greatest of all the Doctors of the Church:

> "*Look*, I insist, at the things which you see. *Believe* the things which you do not see. He who has called you to faith has not abandoned you. Although He bids you believe that which you cannot see, still He has not sent you empty away, without seeing that, through which you may believe what you do not see."[1]

If from the Africa of St. Augustine's day we turn our minds to the Europe of the commencement of the last century—the period when the Church of God was only just emerging from her English catacombs—we may recall some remarkable words of Thackeray:

> "There must be moments, in Rome especially, when every man of friendly heart, who writes himself English and Protestant, must feel a pang at thinking that he and his are insulated from European Christendom. An ocean separates us. From one shore or the other one can see the neighbour cliffs on clear days. One must

[1] *Sermo* cxxvi., cap. iv. 5.

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> wish sometimes that there were no stormy gulf between us, and from Canterbury to Rome a pilgrim could pass and not drown beyond Dover. Lo! yonder inscription which blazes round the dome of the temple, so great and glorious it looks like heaven almost, and as if the words were written in stars, it proclaims to all the world that this is Peter, and on this rock the Church shall be built, against which Hell shall not prevail. Under the bronze canopy his throne is lit with lights that have been burning before it for ages."[1]

The appeal of Catholicism.

And in truth there are few thoughtful men but have felt, at one period or another of their lives, something of the force of the attraction of the Catholic Church, as, throughout the long ages, she bears her unfaltering witness to the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

None with impunity may dare to put her high claims on one side of them, stopping the ears, bandaging the eyes, extinguishing the lights of heaven; none should venture to lull the conscience to rest with easy and soothing generalities as to the impossibility of belief, or concerning the unproved and unprovable incompatibility of Christian faith with the verified conclusions of the physical sciences. Thus to act is to invite sooner or later a Nemesis that never fails.

On the other hand, no man should yield himself to the fascination of Catholicism with

[1] *The Newcomes*, vol. i., chap. xxxv., p. 426.

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too facile a response. That course also spells disaster. Safety lies in one way only (at least, for the educated)—in hearkening, in pausing, in testing, in seeking the aid of God, not only by prayer, but also by intellectual efforts. We have been endowed by our Maker with powers both of observation and of reasoning, with the very intent that we may neither, on the one hand, follow every *ignis fatuus* that may flit across our path in life, nor, on the other, refuse to listen to the call of knowledge and wisdom and truth. So are those not yet Catholic, or, it may be, not yet even Christian, invited to the calm, unbiassed investigation of the credentials of Catholicism and of Christianity.

Summary of the purpose of this book.

HERE, perhaps, we may be permitted to remind the reader of the main purpose of this treatise.

The Catholic Church possesses in her keeping certain books—sacred books she calls them—which testify to her origin, and tell something of her infancy and of her ways in the beginning—books which bear witness that the author of her life and the founder of her destinies, who sent her forth on her long journey down the stream of time, who is the object of her constant and unbroken faith, is also her Lord and her God.

If these books that are in her hands portrayed

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her lineaments with photographic exactness, precisely as the features of her life are familiar in every minute detail to us who scan them closely during this twentieth century; and if, moreover, the evidences for the resurrection and the miracles of Christ, the weight of prophecy, and the like had been successfully challenged and explained away—then, but then only, after all the positive proofs of the truth of Christianity had been disposed of, it might be possible to argue, with some show of plausibility, that the religion of Christ made its way gradually in the world through the operation of one natural cause or another, and that all was ready-ordered and arranged for, from the beginning. Let the Gospel once win acceptance, *then*—so it might be urged—Catholicism would inevitably be found according to a plan preconceived and duly promulgated by the first originators of the new faith. The Catholic Church would, on this hypothesis, present no further difficulty to the objector or attraction to the inquirer.

But we have shown how, far from such being the state of the case, the very opposite is, even startlingly, the fact. It has been easy for Protestants, who may possess some superficial knowledge of the New Testament Scriptures, to express surprise that educated men, having these writings before their eyes, can live and

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die, with full contentment of heart and mind, in the communion of the Catholic Church. Yet that Catholics, persons often of brilliant attainments in the world of letters and of thought, do so live, and do so die, is beyond all cavil or doubt.

If, however, we have looked a little closer beneath the surface, this difficulty, at least, will have vanished, for we shall have seen that these early documents, far from presenting any obstacle to Catholic Faith, give exactly that which is needed in order to corroborate the dogmas and justify the approved customs of the Church.

Books written, as is manifest on their very surface, not to promulgate a Creed, but to supply the spiritual needs of those who, having already received a Creed, were already cognizant of truths which they had learned from their Apostolic teachers, bear their witness not only, on their historical side, to the foundation and to the marks of the visible Church of Christ,[1] but also, incidentally, to the substantial identity of the Catholic Faith with itself in every age, and, above all, to the power and wisdom and divine foresight of Him, from whom the Catholic Faith originates. Unsuspected proof of this character, which could never have been premeditated or designed by impostors, is obviously far more effective than any which we should

[1] *Cf.* St. Augustine, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, xix. 50, 51.

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The Catholic Church.

have anticipated, had its delivery been the direct and primary purpose of the writers of the New Testament Scriptures.

Thus is the world to-day confronted by the spotless Bride of Christ, erect amongst us at this hour, as, reaching back through her storied past to the days of the Gospel narrative when her Lord yet sojourned amongst men, she serenely bears her majestic, never-faltering testimony to the supreme claims of her Crucified Spouse.

Were all other proofs of the truth of Christianity mysteriously to disappear into oblivion, or were all other Christian evidences, in defiance of the facts, to be ruled out of consideration as ineffective and inadequate, the Catholic Church would even then remain, to bar the march of the unbeliever, compelling attention, challenging inquiry as to her gifts and origin, refusing to be denied. She will ever fill, were it only by default, the predestined place that has been prepared for her by heaven, as the prophet and the healer of all the nations of the world. No serious rival may be descried, attempting to cross her path or bar her way.

Dowered with a knowledge of the heart of man that can come only from Him, who made us as we are, she alone knows how to provide a remedy for every ill to which humanity is subject, throughout its difficult passage from the cradle to the grave. In this is she singular

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amongst those who would fain minister to our needs, that she is never at a loss. She never fails those who trust her, whether in temptation, sin, or suffering, or at the very gate of death itself. She reproduces, as in a mirror, both the life and the compassion of Christ. She has been built by the hand of the Most High. She stands in our midst, a living evidence at once of the watchful providence of our Lord and of the merciful purposes of Redemption. Had she not been the heir of His promises and strengthened by His strength who is God, had she been abandoned by Him and left to herself, long since would she have perished from the face of the earth.

Lo! the mighty mother stands before her children too long estranged, inviting them to her breasts; but what burden does she bear in her arms and show to men, that she may assure those who behold her, that it is the milk of truth, not the poison of falsehood, which she gives them to quaff who come to her, that they may surrender to her summons and hide beneath her mantle?

The gift which she offers to all who draw nigh to her consists not of books only, nor of books chiefly; otherwise how could the unlettered and the simple and the poor receive their welcome from the mother who calls them to her side? Her burden is her Child, for

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Shows Christ to men.

has she not been shown to us in the divine Scripture[1] as the woman who bears the Man-child? And has He not assured us that His burden is light and His yoke is easy? This her Burden she gives to all those who will come to her—Christ Himself, the Lord who has said that they who do the will of God are to Him as brother, and sister, and mother; who spoke of old the words, of which the Scriptures have preserved the record, and who has also given us, in due season, the fruit of those marvellous words, in the works which He has accomplished,—the proofs of His Incarnate Godhead, visible to the spirit of man as, to his bodily vision, is visible a city which has been set upon a hill, or a burning light shining in a dark place.

Christ still rules through Peter and his successors.

Once He said *Tu es Petrus*, and Peter still lives on earth. The Papacy is here with us in the twentieth century, as peremptory in its appeal to the conscience as in the eleventh or the fifth age. Pius X. is as strenuous in the assertion of his authority as was ever Hildebrand himself. It is as impossible to ignore the Pope to-day as it was of old-time for the

[1] At this stage of our inquiry we may be allowed to call the Christian Scriptures divine without incurring the charge of question-begging. Christ is God. His works have proved it. The Catholic Church is to be believed in her teaching, as the representative of Christ; but the Catholic Church assures us of the inspiration of the sacred books committed to her care, custody, and interpretation.

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Christian world to refuse to hearken to Gregory the Seventh or to Leo the Great.

Is it the voice of man that we hear, or, rather, that of God, using His Vicar for His own divine purposes? Haply, a man of good-will, not brought up a Catholic, may hesitate as he revolves the question, with its momentous issues, until he bethink himself of the other Voice which spoke long ago to the fisherman, His disciple: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven." "Feed My sheep; feed My lambs." Then, seeing accomplished in actual fulfilment such bold sayings, he may well submit himself, not only to Pius, the servant of the servants of God, but, above all, to the Lord of Pius, and of Leo, and of Gregory, and of Peter himself, for he now knows that, if he would be true to God and to his own reason, there is no alternative left for him to choose. The Papacy may be looked upon as a mighty tablet on which is engraven for all time, and for all who have eyes to see, the power of the creative word of Christ, the fulfilment of His prophecies. He that runs may read.

The Vicar of Christ points men to Christ

Or let a stranger enter a crowded Catholic church early, it may be, on some cold winter's morning. In a moment the great Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered to God, the Maker and

As does the Mass and belief in the Passion of our Lord.

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the Judge of the living and the dead. Close to the door it may well chance that a large, rude crucifix shall meet his eye; and, as he passes, some poor mother, before she herself kneels down in prayer, with tired arms lifts up her little child, to kiss in tender love the pierced Feet of the world's Redeemer.

The sacrifice pursues its measured course, when suddenly, a bell of warning, and the whole congregation is moved by some common, mysterious impulse—as one man it seems—instantaneously to bow the head in lowliest worship,

> "Rapt in adoration
> At the elevation
> Of the Sacred Host."

Whence, a visitor may ask himself, comes this faith in the unveiling of the heavens? Then before the mind flashes in solemn answer the figure of One who said of old, "This is My Body"; and again, "When I am lifted up I will draw all things to Myself." Uplifted cross and upraised Sacrament fulfil before our eyes the very words of Christ. Those words, enshrined in the Christian Scriptures, assure us that we have neither been dreaming nor are now in any danger of surrendering ourselves to idle emotion without substance or reality. Embodied in the great Mysteries of our holy religion, His words (conjoined with their visible accomplishment, from which they can never be

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rightly separated), bear unshaken witness to the Godhead of the Lord who gave them utterance. St. Peter's at Rome—the external home and witness of the one worship which has lasted from the days of the Apostles to our own—the Cathedral at Westminster, the tower of St. Edward, representing our country's ancient Faith risen, as it were, from the dead, pointing us anew to Heaven, and—Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Holy City of Israel—where may we find the common measure of these,—the link, which binds West and East together in an unbroken, conscious unity of harmonious thought and sympathetic feeling? What is the necessary connection between the effect, which we do see, and the cause, which we do not see—between the noble basilicas in London and Rome on the one hand, and the squalid hamlets of Palestine on the other? How can that which is so immense (Christianity, Catholicism), and in one sense so modern, have sprung from a source so insignificant, so strangely remote?

The Grotto of Bethlehem, the Workshop of Nazareth, the Temple of Jerusalem, the Shrines of the New Testament, all alike have found their glory, in being filled with the Fulness of Christ their God. Alike have they been made beautiful by His presence; alike should they rejoice at the coming of Him who is their Peace. Christ and Christ alone can sustain, His

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Divinity alone can account for, Catholic Christendom. The Church of Christ and her visible Head, wielding an influence which reaches to the ends of the world, touching the hearts, illuminating the minds, swaying the wills of men in every clime, are, beyond possibility of question, historically the result of a few words spoken by a carpenter, utterly devoid of any worldly influence, who lived some nineteen hundred years ago in Galilee.

The Successors of the Fisherman, ever threatened, never die. The Cæsars pass, the Popes live on, since Cæsar stands for that which is temporal, whilst Peter witnesses to Him Who is eternal. *Hic digitus est Dei Altissimi.* "For the very works' sake" we may believe, rejoicing, without fear or suspicion of undue credulity.

Harnack's test satisfied by the works of Christ.

Harnack has laid it down that in his opinion "every individual has a right to be judged, not by this or that virtue or defect, not by his talents or by his frailties, but by what he has done. . . . It is *the work done* that forms the decisive test."[1]

Anyone who will apply this test to the work done by Christ must acknowledge that His work stands alone, amongst all the works that our race has seen accomplished. Judged according to this criterion, but one verdict seems possible. To His works our Lord appeals as

[1] *What is Christianity*, p. 194.

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proof that He is God. He has accomplished that which is impossible to a human power, merely of this earth—for, were it of this earth, it would be possible now to match it by some parallel achievement of man. In the face, then, of the phenomena of Catholicism fulfilling the words of Christ, to deny the Divinity of Him who spoke these words and has brought to pass, before our eyes, that which of old He promised, is to dethrone God, only to enthrone Accident on the empty seat.

Need that faith and morals should possess a divine sanction.

Human reason must always remain the great solvent of any faith which claims to be in its subject-matter above reason, unless, indeed, that faith be imposed from above by One who comes forth from God—to teach. Human passions sooner or later will break the force of any ethical code that may endeavour, on spiritual grounds, to restrain those passions, unless that moral law can plead divine authority, with divine sanctions in the background, as its ultimate basis and support.

But even the fretful intellect of man, impatient of restraint, mordant in its criticism, exigent in its demands — even the mobile human will, swayed, now hither, now thither, by wild and dominating impulses, often but little suspected by the onlooker, may learn gladly to give themselves to the keeping and control of the Son of God, "full of truth

and full of grace, of whose fulness we may all receive."

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He, and He alone, by the light-giving torch He bears aloft, can satisfy the restless searchings of the mind, as He alone may, by His divine strength, curb and restrain the otherwise intolerable rebellion of the flesh. The waters of heaven alone shall quench the fires of earth, which else would ever rage unspent.

Is there a Teacher and a Master for men?

The issue is before us which lies at the root of all theoretic speculation, as of all practical conduct. Are, in fact, the problems of life insoluble? Is it idle to strive, because impossible to stay and to regulate passionate desire? Or has the light broken through the darkness and shone upon our path, so that the truth of Christ comes to enlighten us concerning both God and ourselves, and the grace of Christ is given not only to illuminate the mind, but also to purify the heart and to strengthen the will,—thus to free the slave and break the fetters of the captive and the bondsman?

Is Christ God as He claims? Does He teach with authority, that we may safely listen to His word, and will He strengthen, that we may rise from sin?

Answer to this question given by Catholicism.

The Catholic Church provides us with the answer. "Look at me carefully." Such, in every age, is her frank appeal to men. We look, and behold! we pay our homage to the

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Church of the Living God. Changing not in the midst of a changeful and restless world, she is ever true to type, and yet is capable of a power of assimilation which confounds those who term her fossilized or dead, for she is able to adapt herself to her environment under all conceivable circumstances, and is inexhaustible in resource.

Insufficiency of any merely human System of Philosophy.

Many and various have been the philosophic systems with which man has sought to satisfy his intellectual needs and to arrive at a complete and adequate explanation of all the phenomena of his experience, internal and external alike. All these philosophies have expressed some truth, have rested upon some real element of experience, yet all have proved one-sided and inadequate.

Dwelling exclusively on but one aspect of reality, they have sought to explain the whole in terms of a part, and thus have not merely falsified, by exaggeration, the truth which they have apprehended, but also have denied many other truths of equal importance. Hence philosophic speculation has become an arena in which one partial and insufficient system conflicts with another, equally partial and equally insufficient in the opposite direction.

For example, in modern philosophy we find the field disputed between the materialism of scientists such as Huxley, which would reduce all mental phenomena to manifestations of

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matter; the various schools of idealism, which would explain matter in terms of mind; and monism, which would treat mind and matter as ultimately one and the same substance.

Catholic philosophy, on the contrary, denies neither matter nor mind, granting, with materialism, the objective existence of the former, and, with idealism, the substantial reality of the latter. Moreover, while the Catholic will not, like the Monist, confound these two essentially distinct spheres of being, he provides a bond of unity between both in their common derivation from God their Creator.

Such always is Catholicism as compared with philosophies which are merely human. Where they are partial, Catholicism is complete; where they are narrow and one-sided, Catholicism is manifold; where they exaggerate, Catholicism moderates and balances; where they confound, Catholicism distinguishes; where they unduly separate, Catholicism unites. Thus Catholic thought has indeed fulfilled the Apostolic precept, "Prove all things; take what is good." Well does Pater say of the Church's action:

> "Wisdom was dealing as with the dust of creeds and philosophies, so also with the dust of outworn religious usage, like the very spirit of life itself, organizing soul and body out of the lime and clay of the earth."[1]

[1] *Marius the Epicurean*, vol. ii., p. 126.

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Greek speculation, Roman law, Hebrew religion—all these the Catholic Church took, and out of them fashioned the Christian civilization of Europe. And if we will but consider the matter carefully, and look below the surface, we shall surely find (in the main, and subject to the necessary qualifications and explanations) that Catholicism is an affirmation comprehensive of the affirmations of all human systems of thought, modes of feeling, varieties of imaginative insight and forms of religious experience, and a negation solely of their negations. No man, therefore, coming to the Church from any non-Catholic creed or philosophy has really to deny any positive element of his former belief. He may, indeed, do so in appearance, but only to find again the essential truth underlying what he has abandoned comprehended in a wider and deeper truth.[1] As regards Protestantism, this was remarked by Dr. Johnson, who is reported to have spoken thus:

> "A man who is converted from Protestantism to Popery . . . parts with nothing; he is only superadding to what he already had."[2]

[1] To this statement the doctrine of metempsychosis affords an obvious exception, yet even in this case those needs of human nature which have led men to believe in the transmigration of souls find their satisfaction in the revealed fact of Purgatory.

[2] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, i. 467.

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Reflection will surely show us that this holds good, not only of Protestantism, but of all human systems of religion and philosophy when compared with Catholicism.

If we turn from speculation to practice, here also we shall find perfect satisfaction in the teaching of the Catholic Church.

For each period of development in human society, and for all classes and conditions of men, she holds and delivers, without hesitation or illusion, the clear message of divine wisdom. Instinct with possibilities for the amelioration of the ills that lie round about her, she bears in her overflowing hands the spiritual remedies for all the diseases of modern life. No doubt it were easier to serve Philemon than to be the slave of many a "captain of modern industry." But the Church which welcomed the serf to her maternal care dreads not now to stand between the multo-millionaire and the victim of his greed. In the present she lives her life. But her eye is keenly fixed upon the future; and while she sternly rebukes the corruption of a plutocratic bureaucracy, she faces without shrinking a proletariat that has been momentarily estranged from her teaching. When loyalty to her sacred "deposit of truth" demands it, she is not afraid to be unpopular; rather does she grieve to hear any of her children desirous to shout always with the crowd, for how can she

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forget that a shouting crowd once preferred Barabbas to her Lord?

To republics or democracies that would banish or oppress her she has never bent the knee, as of old she never quailed before the insolence of autocrats or the despotism of a Venetian oligarchy. Indifferent to all questions of earthly politics and economics *as such*, she is as uncompromising and unbending before the fallacies of collectivism, so soon as collectivism becomes a cloak and pretence for immoral spoliation, as in her condemnation of unjust individualistic monopolies, or of the attempt to exploit labour without reference to the indefeasible rights of human nature. In her standard of right, inflexible; in her devotion to her mission, fearless; in the protection of her Lord, which never yet has failed her, proudly, supremely confident.

Having triumphed over the ten great persecutions; having laughed to scorn the amphitheatre of the Cæsars and the arena where her sons were cast to the lions; having made coffins for Julian, Domitian, Nero, and many another tyrant; having watched the passing of Luther, and of Henry, and of Elizabeth; having brought the Ghibelline to the gates of Canossa, and seen the arms fall from the hands of Napoleon's soldiers; having outlived Voltaire, and Rousseau, and Strauss, and Renan, what shall she fear in

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the days that are yet to come? Impervious to hostile criticism, unmoved by misrepresentation, ignorance, and slander, she remembers that the servant is not greater than his Lord, and that if His enemies called the Master of the House Beelzebub, so also will they heap opprobrium upon His disciples.

Spread throughout the world, corresponding in her majestic unity and in every characteristic of her supernatural life with the plan foreshadowed by Christ of old, she, the mother and the queen of all the Saints, makes her confident appeal, putting her trust not in any arm of flesh, but in the grace of God and in the strength of the Eternal—for the everlasting Arms are round about her.

Born on the Cross; coming forth from the Heart of the Crucified; strengthened by the strength of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; set aflame by the fires of His coming; her robes stained red by the blood of countless sons and daughters who have counted it supreme joy for her sake to die, yet made white as snow by the purity of her virgins, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; cradled by Mary, who watched over the infancy of Christ the Firstborn; entrusted with the custody of the deep mysteries of the kingdom of God; the Spirit of her Lord ever whispering in the ear of His Beloved, recalling to her mind, according to

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His promise, all the things that He has commanded,[1] guiding her steps in the way of all that He has revealed,[2] so that in every age her voice gives utterance to the manifestation of the Father's Will; encircled with heavenly graces and spiritual endowments beyond all human measure and expectation; given Peter and Paul, James and John as the first princes of her court, Christ's glorious Spouse reigns still in her beauty—without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy, without blemish,[3] the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.[4]

Jesus Christ and His Church may never legitimately be separated even in thought, for she belongs to Him and to no other—He the Bridegroom, she the Bride;[5] she the Body, He the Head.[6] He is with her always, even to the consummation of the world. On His promises she relies securely. Heaven and earth may pass; His Word shall never pass away.

Those who repudiate her claims should look the question squarely in the face. Too often in these latter days men of the world are found to repeat as an idle platitude, that "it is either Catholicism or nothing"; not that they really contemplate submitting themselves to Catholic discipline, but rather that they may hold them-

[1] Matt. xxviii. 20.
[2] John xiv. 26, xvi. 13.
[3] Eph. v. 27.
[4] Heb. xiii. 8.
[5] Eph. v. 31, 32.
[6] Col. i. 18; Eph. v. 23.

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selves free to choose, almost as a matter of course, the *nothing* of the alternative, and thus, in rejecting His Church, may find an easy excuse also to reject our Lord. "Catholicism," they say, "is too difficult to practise—is, in a word, *impossible*."

Seriously should such persons ask themselves how far the excuse may serve them in the end.

Intellectual temptation.

Perhaps here we may be permitted to point out that there is such a thing as temptation of the intellect, drawing some men to resist the claims of God's revelation, just as other men (and the same men at different times) experience temptation of the emotions and lower feelings, to make their will-power fail and reduce them to the level of the brute creation. Consequently, those who are beginning to suspect that the Catholic religion may be true, should be on their guard against each kind of temptation. Whether the trial come through the passions, or (in a more subtle way) through the intellect, success in overcoming will ennoble the character, free the heart from the slavery of merely animal impulses, and preserve the mind from the darkness of want of knowledge (*ἀγνωσία*).

Does any hypothesis exist to account for the extraordinary correspondence of the existing Catholic Church with the ideals and designs of Christ, which undeniably were shown forth

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by Him already in the far-off days of His earthly weakness and seeming failure? If so, that hypothesis should be fairly stated. So far it is absolutely "to seek."

ALTHOUGH *a priori* arguments are not without their dangers and weakness, still they have their own appropriate weight, and, when reinforced by *a posteriori* considerations, may well become irresistible.

Antecedent probability of revelation and of an infallible interpreter of revelation, reinforced by facts and by the words of Christ.

No thinking man who is a Theist will refuse to admit the antecedent probability both of a revelation, and also of an infallible guardian and interpreter of that revelation, when once it has been given to His creatures by their Creator. Without such a key to its true meaning, any revelation would irresistibly tend to become obscure as to its real purpose, and would soon become merely the battle-ground of disputants as to its authentic significance. Thus it would immediately cease to be revelation at all, for revelation, to be Revelation, must *reveal* without ambiguity, clearly and intelligibly, otherwise it is worse than useless, raising expectations doomed to speedy disappointment. Now, this likelihood of a divine Teacher sent by God to men, with which we may fairly start, becomes a certainty in the light that is shed upon it by the Life of Christ, and by the Fact of the Catholic Church, visible upon the earth, throughout all

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the Christian centuries, since first He entrusted to her ministers their great commission.

"Go, teach all nations," was His charge—a charge fulfilled in our midst at this hour in every land that is under heaven.

The mustard seed.

> "And He said: To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? or in what parable shall we set it forth? It is as a grain of mustard seed; which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than are all the seeds that are in the earth: yet, when it is sown, it riseth up, and becometh greater than all herbs of the garden, and forketh out great boughs, so that all the birds of the air may lodge under the shadow thereof."[1]

Such a grain of mustard seed is each of the creative words of Christ.

"*Fiat Lux.*" Thus spoke the Creator of the world in the beginning of time, and straightway there was light.

"*Tu es Petrus.*" Thus spoke the Creator of the new order, and straightway Simon, son of John, became the rock against which the gates of hell should not prevail.

Each of His words has been as that which He termed "less than are all the seeds that are in the earth," but which is to spring up as a

[1] Mark iv. 30-32.

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mighty tree of many boughs, encompassing the world.

Such is every one of His works and mysteries.

> "And when a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities unto Him, He spoke by a parable. The sower went out to sow his seed."[1]

Some pregnant word of Christ has been the seed from which a fair tree has sprung up and blossomed forth in due season. Tiny indeed it seemed and easily to be overlooked when first sown in the soil that was prepared for it; but now that it has come to maturity, it has become a shadow of restfulness cast over the weary earth, where all, if so they will, may repose—the fruit-laden shelter from fierce winds and tempests, offered by kind heaven to the storm-swept children of men.

> "First the seed is sown. Springing from the seed, the shoot bursts forth and climbs up into a sapling. Twigs and leaves develop, till, with branches manifold, the great tree spreads far and wide its boughs. So comes it that to the seed the swelling of the bud is due; from the bud the flower is loosened; and from the blossom,—crown of all,—behold the fruit, at last disclosed."

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[1] Luke viii. 4, 5.

[2] "Granum est primo, et de grano frutex oritur, et de frutice arbuscula enititur. Deinde rami et frondes

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For those distraught with the dread mysteries around us, the Hand of Christ has sown the seed from which has grown,—in manifest fulfilment of His promises to the fisherman on whom He built His Church in Galilee—the authoritative teaching from the Chair of him who holds the keys of heaven.

For the sin-laden and the broken-hearted, into aching wounds are poured the oil of healing and the wine of divine compassion,—in virtue of the word which He spoke in the commencement: "*Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.*"

For those faint through want of food and ready to drop by the way, a Table is furnished in the wilderness,[1] and there is given unto men the Bread that cometh down from heaven. *Hoc est Corpus Meum.* Faith in the Eucharist has sprung from the seed of this word of Christ our Lord.

For all whose spirits yearn for a mother's care, a mother's love, devotion to the dear Mother of their Saviour may be theirs—devotion to her who was given to them by the Saviour Himself from off His Cross. When from that Cross He turned to the disciple whom

invalescunt, et totum arboris nomen expanditur; inde germinis tumor, et flos de germine solvitur, et de flore fructus aperitur" (Tertullian, *De vel. Virg.*, i.).

[1] *Cf.* Ps. lxxvii. 19: "And they spoke ill of God: they said: Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"

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He loved, in that disciple's heart was first sown the grain of mustard seed, from which should grow the great tree of the love of Mary. *Ecce Mater tua.* John, the beloved, himself has told us how from the hour he heard those sacred words he took his Mother unto his own (εἰς τὰ ἴδια—*ad sua*). Since then, how many another disciple of Christ has learned the same lesson from the lips of the same divine Master![1]

For those who hear the heavenly call to leave all earthly things, that so they may strive to walk

[1] The words of our Lord spoken by Him during the three hours of His Crucifixion were freighted with more than their first and immediate signification. They were to carry their charge and bear their lesson for all generations to the end of all the years that were to come.

When He prayed His sublime prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," He interceded not merely for His actual executioners, but for all those in any time or land who should crucify Him by mortal sin.

When He spoke to the thief words of comfort and forgiveness, that Good Thief represented all those who should acknowledge their own guilt and cry to Christ, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom."

Thus "the disciple whom Jesus loved," entrusted by Him from the bed of His Cross to Mary's maternal care, stands for all those who in every age shall, with St. John, call Jesus Christ their Master.

Should this view, perchance, seem to any of my readers fanciful and strained, they may be reminded that its validity, or the reverse, does not materially affect the force of a general argument, which is essentially cumulative in its character, and therefore does not depend for its weight upon the strength of any one or other isolated link of the chain of evidence, which should be regarded as a whole.

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more closely in the footsteps of their Lord, there is ever ringing in their ear the word, which first He spoke to the young man whom He loved: "*If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast, and come, follow thou Me.*" This is the seed that He has cast into the soul of Francis and of Dominic, of Ignatius, of Teresa, and of a great multitude of His chosen servants, until it, too, has become a tree, spreading its healing leaves to the uttermost bounds of the earth.

The Papacy, Confession, the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to our Lady, the Religious Life —we see them all, with many another work of Christ, which has grown and prospered mightily, like some great oak of the forest, bearing a witness, that may not be contradicted, alike to His creative power and to His protecting care through the long ages of Christian time. He who began the good work shall make it perfect even to the end.

Such, above all, is His holy Church herself, shown to us under various metaphors—each suggestive of her unity—now as a house built upon a rock; now as a sheepfold; now as the net of a fisherman; and, once more, as the mustard seed, sown first in the soil of Palestine, when still it was the smallest of all seeds, but stretching its boughs at this hour over all the world, over hill and dale, over woodland, vale and pasture.

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One and the same sap gives life to this tree, wherever it may burgeon throughout all the lands,—His truth and His grace vitalizing every branch, so that all, who will open their ears to listen and their eyes to see, may come and dwell beneath the shade thereof, where the winds of doubt shall no longer toss them to and fro, like drift upon some dark ocean of despair, nor pierce them through and through with the chills of blank negation; neither shall the torrid heats of passion scorch them here. Here too may they find rest for their souls and rejoice with a gladness at once peaceful and triumphant, such as is granted to those alone who have come to the Tree of Life that is flowering upon the earth—that earth which, since His Incarnation, has become to those who love Him the very paradise of our God. And the sunshine from His throne in heaven, piercing through the foliage of the tree which His own hands have planted, shall shine upon all those there sheltered, and fill His children with the joy—beyond all passing joys of earth—that is to be found in believing in His word.

Scio cui credidi.

For the kingdom of heaven which Christ likened to the mustard tree is Catholic, and is One. Has it not been set up at unity with itself, and is it not to be found in the midst of all the tongues and tribes which people the earth?

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Throughout the wide world, that kingdom shall remain to the end, bearing unfaltering witness to the royalty and the Godhead of its King.

Has become a Tree.

Nor may this argument be lightly put aside as empty verbiage. Human words are borne away, as is some floating thistledown on the breezes of the wind. The words of Christ have been proved, along all the centuries' course, never thus to pass away into an inoperative oblivion.

"His words are not words only." They create, and they effect that which they declare.[1]

The words of Christ have, in fact, effected that which they declared.

You may discount as you please what there may be of faulty rhetoric in this, or in that, unveiling of the picture. Human hands must ever somewhat fail even in their best endeavour, but the picture itself remains, and will remain to the end, for in bold outline it was drawn—not by the pen of some mortal painter, through human limitations foredoomed to failure, but by the divine Master Himself in the Eastern solitude.

[1] *Cf.* S. John Chrysostom, *Contra Judæos et Gentiles*, 15, 16. "For His words are not words only. They are the words of God, creative of works. Thus has He made the heavens, thus the earth, the sea, the sun, the angelic choirs. . . Thus too has He built His Church, so that no man should be able her to overturn," etc. (Οὐ γὰρ λόγοι εἰσὶν, ἀλλὰ Θεοῦ λόγοι, ἔργων δημιουργοί, οὕτω τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐποιήσεν, οὕτω τὴν γὴν, οὕτω τὴν θάλασσαν, οὕτω τὸν ἥλιον, οὕτω τοὺς τῶν ἀγγέλων δήμους. . . . Ὠκοδόμησε τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτὴν καθελεῖν δύναιτ' ἄν. κ.τ.λ.)

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The tree yet lives and flourishes which His grace has watered with the dews of heaven—not as that which springs up in the night, but the morning comes, and lo! its place knows it no more. The Mustard Tree of Christ has known nothing which is spasmodic in its growth. Like all the works of God, ordered and even slow in their development, it constantly reaches upwards to the dwelling-place of the Most High.

No earthly husbandman could foster and tend this tree as does He alone who Himself cast its seed into the soil, that when it should have sprung up in due course, its fruits and very leaves might be for the healing of all the nations.

Consider the lilies of the field; ponder the flight of the birds through the air; *then* shalt thou acknowledge the Fatherhood and the Wisdom of God.

Look well upon the mustard tree; dig round about its roots, running through the historic past; above all, cast thy thoughts back upon its seed in the beginning; *then* also shalt thou confess and avow the omnipotence of Christ.

When this tree was yet young, faith was given to men and women and little children, that they might water its roots with the red stream of their blood.

Now that we may see the tree in its maturity,

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faith should surely be easier for us, than for those who lived and died before the fulfilment of the promises of Christ. If we will but examine and "look carefully," intellectual certitude as to the claims of Christ and of His Church shall be ours. If we ask Him, He will give to us without fail, and, having once given, will (provided we be not false to His grace), preserve for us, even to the end, that divine gift of supernatural faith, whereby we shall be enabled to cry to Him throughout what remaining years of life may yet be ours—above all, in our last conscious moments, with all His Saints:

"Tu vere es Salvator nostri; tu es Rex Israel, O Jesu, Fili Mariæ Virginis, Deiparæ, Immaculatæ. Tu Emmanuel; Tu amator, Tu venator animarum, cujus deliciæ esse cum filiis hominum.

"Verba vitæ æternæ habes, et nos credidimus, et cognovimus, quia *Tu es Christus, Filius Dei vivi.*"

"Thou alone hast the words of life eternal, and we have believed, and we have known, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

POSTSCRIPT

SHORTLY after the printing of this book, I happened to take part in the following dialogue, which I wrote down from memory immediately afterwards, word for word (I am confident) just as it occurred :

YOUNG WORKMAN IN A TRAM TO HIS MATE. How these Turks and Arabs do fight to be sure. (*Looking at me*) I suppose that the Italians are fighting for the Pope?

I. I think not. The Pope has nothing to do with this war (*the war between Italy and Turkey*).

HE. It *is surprising* the power *that* man has! (*Pause.*) I am sorry to say.

I. Why *should* you be sorry?

HE. Because it cannot be right that one man should have so much power all over the world.

I. If you are to have one religion all over the world, the same for everybody (as is only right), it must be so. That religion can have only one Head upon the earth.

HE (*rather shyly, but reverently*). Well, God does not say *that*, anyway.

I (*gently*). I think that, if you will consider, you will see that God does say *that!* Christ, you may remember, said to one man, "Feed My sheep." Now, His sheep are "all over the world." Therefore it is not "surprising" to me that one man, who is the Successor of the first Vicar of Christ, should have the world-wide power which was originally given to St. Peter by Christ. *For*

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Christ is God. This truth explains the fact which naturally surprises you so much—the fact which, unless Christ be God, no one can possibly explain.

With this I said good-bye to my friend, passing out of his life, as ship passes ship in the night. But leaving him to his thoughts, with the prayer that the seed, which I had endeavoured to sow, might germinate and one day fructify, walking along the rushing London street, musing the while on Christ and Peter and the frail fishing-craft by the shores of the silent lake in peaceful Galilee, I remembered the book which I had written, and suddenly it flashed across my mind: "There, in what you have just said, is your book in a nutshell."

And so, my dear readers, with every good wish do I at length leave you also to *your* thoughts. It may be that, in the kind Providence of God, we may, some of us, one day or other, meet in some part of the world and talk it all over. But now, at least for the moment, it must be—*Valete.*

O. R. V.-P. C. SS. R.

October 31, 1911 (being the date of the above-recorded conversation).

EPILOGUE BY MR. HILAIRE BELLOC

THE author of this book, which I have read in manuscript with the closest and most absorbed interest, has asked me to add a few words of my own at the close of its pages.

I confess I do so with very great hesitation. Nothing but my admiration for the arguments presented and the order in which they are enforced would persuade me to venture into a field which I am quite unfitted to enter. The matter of religion and its apologetic are but rarely business for the layman. It is his to conduct the civil side of the struggle, and he should surely leave the technical and, as it were, the professional, part of the Church's definitions and arguments to that sacred organism of the priestly institution which expresses in such matters the voice and the conscious mind of the whole body.

Nevertheless, history is a matter for laymen ; and contemporary modes of false philosophy with which laymen are (in a Protestant country) continually in contact, are things the nature of which they can appreciate, and the reply to which they can therefore judge.

As it seems to the writer of these few words, the present form of resistance which the Church must overcome—at any rate, in England—is something different from that which it has had to meet in the past. It has to overcome, in general, a process of suggestion.

The Catholic has not to meet reason with reason to the same extent that he was called upon to do so in earlier times; for the last fruit of the Reformation—the final product, so to speak, of that group of heresies, the vital principle of which is now departed, but whose result is still strongly present in Europe—seems to be a weakening of the reasoning power. Men under the last influence of Protestantism are wearied by pure reasoning. They are at once uninstructed in any logical method and contemptuous of the effects of logic, nor are there any more striking aspects in the dissolution through which the separated provinces of European civilization are passing than the increasing unwillingness or inability they show to think; their preference for emotion or for happening over an explanation of either; their neglect of definition, and their relapse or perversion into a mere mental drift.

In the place, therefore, of system and of brain-power directed against us, what we have to meet nowadays (at least in the Protestant countries) is something like what we have to

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meet in the erroneous workings of very young or very imperfect minds in daily life—to wit, fixed conceptions for which no reason can be given, but which are none the less strong; assertions which our opponents have accepted without examination simply because they were assertions; and, in general, an accepted tone of thought and an accepted view of history which is none the less powerful because it is so grossly at issue with clear thinking in the one case and historical truth in the other.

This being so, it seems to me that the weapons with which we must go armed into controversy to-day are, first, the exposition of first principles; second, the application of these principles—made as lucid as possible to suit the mind of our time (which is impatient of labour)—to historical truth.

Take, for example, a point which has been touched on in the book before the reader—what is called the "Johannine controversy."

Most educated men in England who have concerned themselves at all with such subjects, carry in their minds a vague impression that scholars have shown the Gospel of St. John to be a late document, and one that in time, as in in composition, could not be ascribed to an Apostolic origin.

How is this preconception to be met?

Surely *first* by putting before the reader the

first principles upon which the authenticity of *any* ancient document must be judged (the presumption from tradition, the presumption from internal affirmation, and so on); and *next* by showing how valueless, judged in the light of first principles, are the arguments brought against the authenticity of the fourth Gospel.

Of modern non-Catholic English readers, not one in a hundred would have proceeded upon this simple and obvious method. To ninety-nine it will be a revelation, and a most useful one.

The ninety-nine will have begun with a general conception that educated men in the bulk thought such and such a thing to be true. The ninety-nine will have considered the names of authorities attached to arguments rather than the arguments themselves. It is not too much to say that for the ninety-nine the mere printing of Greek words in Greek type and with the Greek accents has had some magical effect. Again, the ninety-nine believe vaguely that there exists in relation to the controversy a great mass of early testimony which only the patient and laborious work of great scholars can sift and judge.

Well, it should surely be possible in this one particular point (a typically modern Protestant point) to set the truth before the modern Protestant public. Here are the criteria by

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which the authenticity of any old document is judged. The burden of proof lies with those who would attack its traditional authenticity. What do they bring into court? Not a mass of evidence, sifted or otherwise, but a mass of assertion and hypothesis. The actual evidence can be read at a sitting by anyone acquainted with Greek. That evidence, properly translated, can be sufficiently appreciated even by men who are not acquainted with Greek, and when the negative arguments (as opposed to mere assertion and hypothesis) have been faced, we find them ludicrously insufficient for the task upon which the pleader set out.

Now, not only we Catholics should find such an attack insufficient, but any unbiassed reader would do so. I mean by an unbiassed reader one who was indifferent both to the attack upon and to the defence of Catholicism; someone remote in time, or in distance, or in mental texture, from our quarrel. Such a man might easily take up the position that the account given in the Gospel was imagined or was indifferent to truth, but he could not take up the position that it was proved to be *so much later than the events described* as to make it *on that account* unacceptable; or, that if the Character described in it had historical existence, that Character was never in contact with the writer of the Gospel. Of these two propo-

sitions—which most of educated Protestant Europe until lately accepted by suggestion, and not from proof—there is not evidence upon which the most careless man would risk the investment of a ten-pound note.

To take another point. Father Vassall-Phillips has dealt with the Papacy. Let me apply his methods to an allied subject—the original establishment of Episcopacy.

This battle is by this time won, and modern history as a whole is nearly unanimous; but while it was yet raging, was not the anti-Catholic attitude what I have described? Take a non-Catholic man of education who had upon the first centuries of Christian history nothing but the general impression which an ordinary education will give. Such a man, though quite incapable of passing a simple examination in the names and the order of the Roman Emperors, or of setting down, perhaps, more than half a dozen dates between the accession of Tiberius and that of Constantine, would know far more of the Pagan civilization of those three centuries than of the contemporary Christian growth. Yet, ignorant as such a man might be of our origins, he was fairly dogmatic in his attitude towards them.

He would have told you that "at first" (which phrase would stand in his mind for perhaps two centuries, and include the whole

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period of the Antonines) the Christian Church was no more than a number of isolated communities bound together by no more than a general common opinion; that in it, as in all societies, some sort of rough organization had grown up; members in each locality had to be chosen "somehow" to manage the affairs of that particular Church, and that "later" (he would use the word "later" in a most indefinite sense) "contact with the Roman Empire" produced an official episcopacy.

Now, what greater contrast could you have than the contrast between such a summary and the actual historical truth? To the mere historian, evidence of episcopacy is stamped upon even the meagre records of the sub-Apostolic age; established episcopal institutions are working, as clearly as ever any institution worked, within one long lifetime of the sub-Apostolic age; the unconscious taking for granted of episcopacy the moment records became numerous; the absence of any criticism of episcopacy until long centuries had destroyed the greater part of our original evidence; the perpetual claims to Apostolic succession—all these complete, not our faith, but our historical *knowledge* upon the matter.

Such, I say, would seem to me one most powerful method of modern apologetic: to restate first principles and to apply them to

known truths. But this line of argument entails a converse method; it is that converse method which Father Vassall-Phillips has chosen, and which Monsignor Benson, in his Preface to this book, has so clearly emphasized.

When you are dealing with a state of mind to which the labour of thinking is unusual and commonly distasteful, you may not only try to rearouse the love of thinking by the presentation of first principles, and, these presented, by proceeding to show how, in the light of such principles, facts confirm your thesis; you may also approach that state of mind from exactly the opposite direction, and say: "Since you do not like thinking, here are some facts." And it is, of course, the Greatest Fact of all which Father Vassall-Phillips has made the business of his book. He presents the Catholic Church.

I am not sure that, in spite of my own inclination to the first method, this second method, which I have called its converse, is not the more powerful, as it is certainly the more immediate, in its appeal to the English temper of our time.

A parallel will make my point clear.

Let us suppose a man who has learned no mathematics, and has lived in a society where mathematical science is suspected of vanity at the best and charlatanry at the worst.

To such a man mathematical symbols are,

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by their mere appearance, a repellent; and this man believes, let us say, that a field of his is a ten-acre field. He has always heard people say so; as for those who have told him it was a five-acre field, many to his knowledge were interested in belittling his property, and he could easily persuade himself that the others may have been in the same frame of mind. Being a man averse to the trouble of thinking, he has, of course, argued all his life in a circle about the matter. "How do I know that my field contains ten acres? Because it is the ten-acre field! But why do I call it the ten-acre field? Because it contains ten acres!"

Go to such a man with measurements and calculations, and he will suspect you more vehemently than a man who should merely assert that his property was smaller than he had imagined. But show him a number of letters covering a considerable period of time, in which various people, many of them quite unconnected with the others, spoke of the measurements of the field and found it to be five acres, bought it and sold it as being of five acres, paid taxes on it as being of five acres, and you will have produced a very different effect upon his mind. Get him out of his hypnosis by the presentation of a *fact* which requires upon his part nothing more onerous than recognition and observation, and you appeal to him

(who dislikes the apparatus of measurement) more powerfully, perhaps, and certainly more immediately, than by any deductive method.

Now, the Catholic Church is a fact of that kind, and modern indifference to it, much more than modern hostility, is made up of an ignorance of that great fact.

The man who presents the Catholic Church as a fact, showing not what those who ignore it may imagine it to be, but what it actually is and has been, must necessarily produce in the uncritical mind (which I am presupposing as characteristic in our time and country) a fundamental disturbance.

"You thought so and so," he says to that opponent. "You could not quite say why you thought so. It was the atmosphere of your habitat and time. Well, look at *this*. Appreciate it thoroughly, and then see how you feel with regard to those old views of yours."

"You hold certain things in history and in contemporary life—A, B, C, and D. You have, of course, no personal experience of them; you take them for granted; you have been told them. Now, then, if I can show you E, and can bring E into your actual experience, you will necessarily discover that A, B, C, and D—your imaginaries—do not fit in with this fact E. And a fact can always destroy an imaginary."

The man so addressed will, for instance, have

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so looked upon the world as to believe that a religion was necessarily a set of mere opinions; that these opinions changed (while the religion kept its name); and that the acceptance of it by its votaries was irrational—that is, not analogous to any of those processes of the mind to which he is accustomed to attach validity. You show him the Catholic Church, which is not, and never has been, a bundle of opinions, but an institution from the first, which has no more changed in identity than an individual changes in the process of life; you show him that men accept the Church (among other ways) by the way of *integration*, which is precisely the manner in which he accepts every part of his daily experience, for you show him that men are frequently inclined to the Church from their discovery that an indefinitely large number of small differential particular points of experience exactly fit in with the integral supplied by the Church, and that process of integration from differentials is precisely the way in which we all recognize an oak-tree or the face of a friend. It is essentially the opposite of the way in which we suffer delusion or impose deception upon ourselves.

Again, the man you thus approach with the Great Fact of the Catholic Church may have thought that a religion was a system—a system of ideal propositions which could quite easily

be made to fit into one another because they were each but figments of the brain. That is certainly true of most philosophies; but you show him the Catholic Church, which is a system exactly co-related, and is yet perpetually corresponding with external fact. You show him that the Catholic Church, so far from being, as he imagined, comparable to a mathematical drawing, is comparable rather to a map, and—in the use we make of her discipline and doctrine—is used, not with the merely intellectual satisfaction with which a diagram is followed, but with the same practical object (and with the same practical satisfaction) as a map would be used, corresponding perpetually with reality, and perpetually preparing us for new experience.

One of two things must happen when the Great Fact of the Catholic Church is so presented to such a mind: either (and this is common enough) it will prefer to return to its imaginary historical and contemporary hypothesis, accepting falsehood as a kind of drug, or else, I say, the disturbance caused in it will be fruitful—how far fruitful will depend upon the native humility, the native intelligence, the curiosity of the mind so attacked, and also upon other elements which it is for theologians to define.

There is in this presentation of the Great Fact of the Catholic Church a force peculiar to

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that institution alone, which force it has been evidently the object of Father Vassall-Phillips' book to emphasize. It is this: that the Catholic Church corresponds with a plan, which plan existed, and can be demonstrably and historically shown to have existed, not only before the Church was finally organized, but in a time when men could not have conceived what the Church was going to be.

It is, as I have said, a compelling thing when the mind discovers the Church to propound in theory all manner of details in conduct and morals which later experience proves exactly conformable to actual life.

It is, again, a compelling thing when certain pronouncements of the Church with regard to her own nature and destiny prove true in the face of forms of opposition, negligence, and internal disturbance which would vitiate such confidence in the case of any other institution.

But it is still more compelling to the mind to find an original pronouncement, made before such-and-such institutions and modes of action had come into being, corresponding exactly with those institutions and modes of action.

Indeed, the only thing that clouds our sense of the marvellous in the matter is that for so many centuries the matter was taken for granted —taken for granted as a marvel and a mystery,

but taken for granted none the less. Whether they will or no, the least Christian of modern men are utterly steeped in the Catholicism of over a thousand years. Their ancestry, and therefore their terminology and their form of thought, presupposes the Catholic Church; and where the Catholic Church corresponds to an original Gospel thesis, it seems but natural to them that it should so correspond. All this is but an example of that great and native fallacy which we are all liable to, of "reading history backwards."

But suppose a mind quite independent of such an ancestry and such habits, what would that mind make of statements in documents certainly 1,800 years old, and their correspondence with a developed institution which he could see before him to-day? The development of that institution, be it noted, having nothing about it of a mechanical plan, but being, in its deliberate and majestic progress, most eminently a thing of growth. What would a mind, judging independently, make of the correspondence between one and the other over such a gulf of time?

That the correspondence is amazing is best proved by the simple, but historically false, habit into which men not Catholic, but European, have fallen—of omitting in their application of the Gospels all that which specially emphasizes

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the relations between the Gospels and the modern Church.

Men influenced by this evil tradition choose only to regard just so much of the Gospels as may be made a mere opinion of, or made to support a vague ethical sentiment. But what of the documents as a whole? No one can read them as a whole without finding the foundation of an institution which he sees acting everywhere round him to-day. This, perhaps, is the most striking, as it is certainly the most unusual, method of presenting the Great Fact of the Catholic Church. And one is led by a consideration of it to be certain that, on this ground, as on every other, the business of the Catholic in defence of Catholicism is to demand the right to be heard—and no more. He must ask only to be allowed to show the Church as it is, everywhere. That is the main objective of our modern battle.

So true is it that this method of presentation, this depicting of the Catholic Church as it is, must work by disturbance to some effect in a Protestant society, that all who are acquainted with the modern attack against the Church recognize by this time that this attack has for its main weapon the force called "obscurantism." Those who in Catholic countries know well enough what the Church is, and hate it, do not convey to the masses of non-Catholic countries

a picture of the Church, and then bid them hate it too. They keep the non-Catholic countries ignorant of the very nature of the struggle. One might even venture the paradox that the sort of uninstructed tolerance which is still accorded to the Faith in Protestant civilizations is the very best ally of the furious and direct onslaught which is being led upon the Faith in those regions which stood fast in the sixteenth century, or where (for there are some such) the Church has been vigorously replanted after its uprooting.

But to follow this line of thought would lead me much too far. I have attempted in these few words only to guess at what sort of apologetic might be the most useful in our time, and they have been provoked, as the reader will discover, by the close reading of the very original and striking piece of work to which they are only appended by the express wish of Father Vassall-Phillips, the author.

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APPENDED NOTE A

(See p. 101.)

Matt. xvi. 23.

THE Greek text runs as follows: 'Ο δὲ στραφεὶς, εἶπε τῷ Πέτρῳ· "Ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ, σκάνδαλον εἶ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.'

Simon Peter had just confessed that Christ was the Son of God. In this confession he savoured not the things that are of men, but the things that are of God. Flesh and blood had not declared it unto him, but his Father who is in heaven. He had not, however, yet learned to take up his cross and follow his Master even to the death. Consequently, out of love and devotion to our Lord, he deprecated the suffering that lay before Him. In this he no longer savoured the things that are of God, but now the things that are of men—of flesh and blood. Therefore by his words of protest he ranged himself for the moment on the side of those who opposed the merciful and self-sacrificing designs of the Saviour of the world.

To quote St. Augustine: "But whence was it given unto Peter to say, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'? Whence came it unto him? Was it *from his own?* God forbid. It is well that this very chapter of this Gospel shows both what Peter had *from God*, and what he had *from his own.* And the Lord said to him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona.' Wherefore? *From anything that is thine own art thou blessed?* No. 'Because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,' for this [flesh and blood] art thou. ('Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven.') And He goes on, and says the rest, which is too long to cite. A little

after . . . 'He began to show unto His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and scribes and chief priests, and be killed, and rise again the third day.' Then Peter, *from that which was his own*, was horror-stricken at Christ's death; the sick man was terrified at his medicine. 'Be this far from Thee, O Lord,' he saith. 'Be kind to Thyself; let this not be done. . . .' Hast thou forgotten, Peter? Thou hast forgotten. 'Greater love no man hath than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.' Thou hast forgotten. That forgetfulness is *from his own;* the trepidation, the horror and the fear of death—all are of Peter's; yea, rather, *of Simon's, not of Peter's.* And the Lord said, 'Get thee behind, satan. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona,' and 'Get thee behind, satan.' *Whence?* Recollect, *whence is he blessed?* I have said already: 'Because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven.' *Whence is he satan?* Let the Lord answer: 'For thou savourest not the things that are of God, but those that are of men.'"[1]

And once more: "'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven. It is *from Mine*, not *from thine.* Wherefore *from Mine?* Because all things that the Father hath are Mine.' Behold, thou hast heard the reason wherefore he is blessed, and wherefore he is Peter. But wherefore is he that which we shudder at, and are loth to repeat ('illud quod horrescimus, et repetere nolumus')? Wherefore, excepting *from his own*, 'For thou savourest not,' etc."[2]

The late Dean Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, points out that the word *σαταvâs* here is not equivalent to "devil," but simply means "adversary," and refers his readers to the modern usage of the Arabic *shaitan* in the East. The word *satan* is actually retained in the Hebrew sense of *adversary* in the Latin text of the Vulgate (3 Reg. v. 4), and is thus read every year in the Breviary lessons

[1] *Sermo* clxxxiii. 14, *Rursum de verbis Epistolæ I. Johannis*, cap. iv.

[2] *Sermo* lxxvi. 3; *cf. Sermones* ccxxxii. 4; ccliv. 7; cclvii. 3; cclxx. 2; ccxcvi. 2; *Enarratio in Psalmum* cxxxviii. 22.

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(Feria Sexta, in Hebd. vii. post Oct. Pent.) : "Et non est satan, neque occursus malus."

These words of Peter, then, were a stumbling-block or obstacle (σκάνδαλον) to the Redeemer, whose meat and drink it was to do on earth the will of His Father in heaven. Of His own Will He had been sent to suffer in the midst and on behalf of a suffering world, but was yet to cry aloud to that same Father, in the hour of His stricken humanity, "If it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me."

So far no difficulty is likely to arise as to the exegesis of the passage. Questions, however, may easily arise as to the meaning of the words Ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου. They are ordinarily translated "Get thee behind Me."

But Origen, in his Commentary on St. Matthew (540, 541), having observed that, whenever our Lord is said *to turn to anyone* (ὁ δὲ στραφείς), it is for their spiritual welfare—"Blessed is he to whom Christ turned, even though He turns to rebuke, as He turned to Peter"—proceeds to point out that to the Evil One Christ had said simply, "Ὕπαγε begone" (Matt. iv. 10), whereas to His Apostle He said, "Get thee behind *Me*." "It is good," he proceeds, "to be behind Jesus, for it was said, 'Come behind Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" We feel that it is most ingenious, but that (as is so often the case with Origen) it is pure *sermonizing*, and sermonizing of a very loose character.[1] On philological grounds this view would be indefensible, even if the Greek phrase stood alone, for any such interpretation of the words of Christ labours under the overwhelming disadvantage of ignoring the *primary difference* between the ideas con-

[1] Several of the Fathers, however, have followed this interpretation. Amongst these, in two passages, is to be found St. Augustine, who writes as follows (*Sermo* cccxxx. 4): "*Get thee behind Me.* If thou gettest behind ME, thou shalt follow ME, thou wilt then take up thy cross, and be to ME not a counsellor, but a disciple." And again (*Enarratio in Psalmum* cxxvi. 4): "*Get thee behind ME*, that I may go on before, and thou mayest follow after,—so that whither I go, thither thou mayest also go; that thou mayest not wish to lead ME thither, whither thou dost desire to go."

veyed in the words *go* and *come*. The expression *go after* is essentially different from *come after*. Yet (as may be seen from Thayer-Grimm's *Lexicon of the New Testament Greek*) the word ὕπαγε invariably implies *going* or departure.

Were Origen's opinion correct, the Greek word would have been δεῦρο, not ὕπαγε. Moreover, his homily is on this point entirely out of harmony with the context, where we see clearly that there is a rebuke—no mere exhortation. Peter could not well be summoned to follow Christ in the same sentence in which he was termed Christ's "adversary, savouring not the things that are of God, but those that are of man."

However, we are not limited to the Greek text to find the true meaning of these words. Father Gerald Stack has had the kindness to communicate to me the following note: "Perhaps the last and most authoritative word on this subject is contained in Mrs. Agnes Smith-Lewis's recently published work, *The Old Syriac Gospels, or Evangelion da Mepharreshe* (Williams and Norgate, 1910). This learned lady, in her *Notes on Remarkable Passages* (p. 17), writes as follows: 'Matt. iv. 10. Dr. Merx points out that the expression *zel lĕvestrâkh*, ὕπαγε ὀπίσω σου, is a Syriac idiom which has been corrupted in some Greek MSS. (C.D.L.) into ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου, and was then retranslated, as in the Curetonian, into *zel lĕvestar(y)* (Merx, *Die vier kanonischen Evangenlien*, Part II., 1st half, pp. 54-56). Matt. xvi. 23, where this idiom ought again to occur, is unfortunately on a lost leaf.' With regard to the above, let me add that I have myself verified the occurrence of this idiom in the following passages of the *Peshitta*, or current Syriac Version: Matt. xxiv. 18; Mark xiii. 16; Luke ix. 62; xvii. 31; John vi. 67; xviii. 6. This list of occurrences of the idiom might be easily increased by further reference to the *Peshitta*, to the *Old Syriac Version*, and to the *Palestinian Syriac*. I feel confident that no competent scholar will venture to dispute the conclusion arrived at by Dr. Merx."

In other words, the Syrian added a pronoun in a sort of reflexive sense. Instead of saying, "I went back;

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thou wentest back ; he went back," he said, "I went to *my* back ; thou wentest to *thy* back ; he went to *his* back," etc., so that our Lord's words to St. Peter meant literally, "Get thee to the back of thee," not "to the back of Me."

In any case, the text clearly means, to put it alliteratively, "Begone [avaunt !] thou, who art a *foe* [instead of a friend], for thou art a hindrance [instead of a help]. In this matter thou art judging not as God, but as man, judges ; according to this world, not according to the next ; according to the promptings of flesh and blood, not according to the instincts of faith."

It is clear that St. Peter well understood the precise sense of the words of Christ, for, far from actually retiring from His company, he remained by His side, and listened with the other disciples to the exhortation which seems to have immediately followed : "If any man will *come* after Me (εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν), let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

It is of interest to note that each of the three great Petrine texts, in which St. Peter's *official* position is clearly defined, is shortly followed by a rebuke or warning addressed to him in his *private* and personal capacity.

(α) Ὕπαγε, κ.τ.λ., comes after Μακάριος εἶ, Σύμων βὰρ Ἰωνᾶ (Matt. xvi. 16-24).

(β) "I say unto thee, Peter, that the cock shall not crow to-morrow before thou hast denied three times that thou dost know Me" follows quickly on, "I have made supplication for thee that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 31-35).

(γ) Our Lord's answer to St. Peter's ill-considered question concerning St. John, "If I will that he remain until I come, what is it to thee?" was given immediately after the great commission to tend the sheep and lambs of Christ, and the declaration that, by a death like unto his Master's own, he should "glorify God" (John xxi. 15-23).

Our Lord provides for the needs of His people, constituting Peter the Rock on which He would build His Church, makes supplication for his faith that it should not fail, so that he might "confirm" (establish)

his brethren, and leaves him in charge of His whole flock, but is careful at the same time to provide for the necessities of Peter's own individual soul by salutary admonitions—even by reproofs which, administered in the first place for the sake of Christ's chief Apostle, have been left on record by the Evangelists for the spiritual advantage of all those of the disciples of Christ, who should read the narrative, with due understanding, to the end of time.

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(See p. 116.)

Origen on St Matt. xvi. 18.

In his commentary on Matt. xvi. Origen states not merely that "each of the heterodox" (the immediate context shows that he means heresiarchs) "has built a gate of hell—Marcion one, and Basilides another, and yet another Valentinus" (528)—but also that each of the Faithful may be a rock against which such gates of hell shall not prevail. The "gates of hell" are heresies and sins, the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" are virtues, and (according to the same method of exegesis) the "rock" is any disciple of Christ who perseveres in faith and goodness. If the Spirit of God teaches us, as He taught Simon Bar-jona, to say to our Lord, "Thou art the Christ," we, too, shall hear the word, "Blessed art thou," and shall thus become a rock on which Christ builds His Church. Those who share in Peter's God-given faith and imitate Peter's confession shall share in Peter's privileges (*Homil. in Matt.*, tom. xii. 524 *et seq.*). Origen proceeds to meet an objection, which he evidently foresees will be made against this moralizing, from the accepted doctrine of Peter's Primacy. "If, then, you think that upon this one Peter alone [to the exclusion of any other mystic Peter] the whole Church was built by God" (*εἰ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν ἕνα ἐκεῖνον Πέτρον νομίζεις ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ οἰκοδομεῖσθαι τὴν πᾶσαν ἐκκλησίαν μόνον*), "what have you to say concerning John, the Son of Thunder, and each one of the other Apostles? Shall we venture to say that, whilst the gates of hell shall in a special way not prevail against Peter, they shall prevail against the rest of the Apostles and against the perfect?"

Tertullian and others, in the course of ecclesiastical

history, have too often, after lapsing into heresy, turned bitterly against the Holy See. And it has been argued —for example, by Harnack (*History of Dogmas*, i. 4) —that, when Origen wrote these words, he wished to break a lance with the Pope, since his orthodoxy (as he well knew) was already held to be suspect, not only by the Bishop of Alexandria, but also by the supreme authority of Rome.

It may be so. But it is by no means certain, on the evidence. Such an inference seems to me to suggest the perilous habit of reading modern controversies into ancient documents, rather than the more laborious, but far surer, way of considering the circumstances under which those documents came into being, their method and scope, and of then allowing them to speak for themselves. That Origen's explanation of Matt. xvi. 18 is allegorical is manifest both from the nature of his writings in general and from his own express statements in four other places :

1. He terms St. Peter "that great foundation of the Church, and most solid rock on which Christ founded the Church" ("Vide magno illi Ecclesiæ fundamento, et petræ solidissimæ, super quam Christus fundavit Ecclesiam, quid dicatur a Domino") (*Homil. in Exod.*, v. 145).

2. He distinguishes between offences committed against Peter "as a brother" and against Peter "over whom the gates of hell do not prevail" (*Comment. in Matt.*, 620).

3. He writes of "Peter, upon whom the Church of Christ is built"—Πέτρος δὲ ἐφ' ᾧ οἰκοδομεῖται ἡ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησία (*Comment. in Joan.*, tom. v. 95).

4. In order to illustrate the pre-eminence of love over faith and hope, he draws attention to the fact that when "the supremacy in feeding the sheep was handed over to Peter, and the Church was founded upon him as upon its base (even as a house is built upon the ground), the confession of no other virtue is asked of him excepting love" ("Petro cum summa rerum de pascendis ovibus traderetur, *et super ipsum*, *velut super terram*, fundaretur Ecclesia, nullius alterius ab eo virtutis confessio nisi

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charitatis exigitur" (*Comment. in Epist. ad Rom.*, lib. v., 568).

Moreover, in his commentary on St. John, Origen writes that St. Andrew "brings his brother to Christ, to whom (being Simon) Jesus gave the grace of looking upon him, which signifies that by looking upon him He also enlightened the dominating part of his soul" (*τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*, a Platonic expression for the reason which, as an authoritative principle, guides all the other powers), "so that he received the name of the work of stability and strength, and was called Peter"—*Σύμωνι ἐχαρίσατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸ ἐμβλέψαι αὐτῷ, ὅπερ ἐστὶ διὰ τοῦ ἐμβλέψαι καὶ φωτίσαι αὐτοῦ τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, ὥστε τοῦ ἔργου τῆς βεβαιότητος καὶ τῆς στερρότητος ἐπώνυμος γενέσθαι καὶ κληθῆναι Πέτρος* (*Comment. in Joan.*, tom. ii. 91).

Origen, it may be pointed out, is in the habit of distinguishing theoretically between three senses of Holy Scripture, which he calls the *somatic*, *psychic*, and *pneumatic* respectively. In practice he often neglects—and this is held to be one of his principal faults—to explain the literal (*somatic*) sense (*e.g.*, in 524, etc., that our Lord made St. Peter the chief of the Apostles), *for he is preaching sermons* (*cf.* p. 500, *supra*). Thus here, having made a mere allusion to Peter's Primacy, he passes swiftly on to the moral lesson, and lays it down that "every Christian may be a rock." People did not attend the lectures of Origen in order to be told that which they knew already, and which no one yet had had the temerity to deny, but to hear *mystical* meanings drawn out of the Holy Scriptures.

St. Ambrose, always attracted by a mystical interpretation of Holy Scripture, is alone amongst the Fathers in following the lead thus given by Origen.[1] He writes as follows:

"One who has overcome the flesh is a foundation of the Church. If he cannot come up to Peter, he can imitate him (Si æquare Petrum non potest, imitari

[1] St. Cyril of Jerusalem, however (*Cat.* xi. 3), and St. Epiphanius (*Ancor.* c. 2) call attention to the consoling truth that they who have confessed Christ, with Peter, may hope to have their share in Peter's blessedness.

potest). . . . The rock is Christ. . . . He did not refuse the grace of this Name even to His disciple, to be himself Peter, that from the Rock he should obtain strength of constancy, firmness of faith. Strive, therefore, thou, that thou also mayest be a rock" ("Enitere, ergo, ut et tu petra sis").[1]

Mary is in a strict sense, which no other can share, the Mother of our Lord; yet we, who know this, know also from His own divine lips that each one of us may in a real (though allegorical) manner become His Mother too. Thus St. Ambrose reminds us that "Whosoever has believed, both conceives and gives birth to the Word of God, and knows His works. . . . According to the flesh, one is the Mother of Christ; according to faith, however, Christ is the Fruit of all."[2] This teaching of our Lord and of His Church (dear to Catholics, on which they are urged often to meditate for their soul's profit) is continually misrepresented and twisted away from the meaning of the rest of Holy Scripture by the unbeliever.

Bearing such an illustration as the above in mind, we may realize how Origen, having, as we have seen, stated categorically the great truth that St. Peter is "the most solid rock on which Christ has founded the Church," felt that (this being well understood) it was safe to lay down the practical truth that every "disciple of Christ" also may, by faith, like to Peter's own, become a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. In some similar fashion St. Bonaventure (also sermonizing) argues (*Sermo* i. de B.M.V.) that the Blessed Virgin, through her unshaken faith, was the Rock on which the Church has been built. No one would be so perverse as to maintain from this discourse of St. Bonaventure that he did not believe that St. Peter was in a unique and most special sense the visible Rock on which Christ built the Church; yet his words are absolutely unconditioned, and at first sight quite as unequivocal as are the allegorical disquisitions of Origen on the same subject.

Origen, however, seems himself to have felt some scruple lest he might have depreciated unduly that office

[1] *In Luc.*, vi. 95, 97. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 26.

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which had been conferred upon St. Peter alone. Accordingly, we find him saying that "since it was necessary that Peter have special honour" (Ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ ἐχρῆν . . . ἐξαίρετον ἔχειν τὸν Πέτρον), "our Lord said to him *in private*, 'I will give *unto thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven' *before* he said to all the Apostles, 'Whatsoever *you* shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven'" (613). Origen also declares (614) that "a great difference and superiority" (πολλὴν διαφορὰν καὶ ὑπεροχήν) "between that which was said to Peter alone and that which was said to the others, is to be found in the fact that whereas St. Peter received the keys, not of one heaven, but 'of all the heavens' [in the plural], to the rest it was said, 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound' not 'in the heavens,' but [in the singular] 'in heaven.'" This distinction exists in the Greek only, not in the Aramaic used by Christ, and in any case would seem to any modern reader to be an exceedingly far-fetched refinement of exegesis. Still, the distinction is of some importance as affording further proof of the fact that Origen (whatever may seem to be the force of his previous words taken by themselves) agrees with every other ancient Christian writer who has treated the subject in his extant works, in recognizing and acknowledging the Primacy of Peter.

It seems strange that it should be necessary to insist that, if egregious blunders are to be avoided, the writings of Catholics (of every period) must be read in the light of Catholic doctrine, and that, in case of obscurity, they should be collated with other passages from their own works, and with the writings of their contemporaries who shared their Faith.

Yet elementary canons of literary interpretation, which no one would dream of violating in the case of Thucydides or Æschylus, are continually set at naught by non-Catholic commentators on Origen or Ambrose or Augustine.

Origen is, as we need hardly say, on certain matters a writer of (at best) but doubtful orthodoxy. We may remember the contrast drawn by St. Jerome between "the faith which is the strength of the Roman Church, and

that which is in the volumes of Origen."[1] The recklessness with which Origen constantly departs from the literal sense of Holy Scriptures often leads him into the strangest extravagances and even sophisms. Still it is certain that no support can be obtained by any reference to his voluminous works (which is more than a merely superficial examination of one particular passage), for the theory that Christ built His Church "not upon Peter, but upon the body which He gathered round Him." But if the appeal to Origen breaks down, it is hardly probable that an appeal to any other Father will be seriously set up. The words of Christ to Simon Peter are too direct to admit of real hesitation of mind as to their primary significance. Secondary meanings no doubt they may contain (as many different jewels may be hidden in some casket of pure gold), and from their divine beauty allegorical moral lessons may be drawn in rich abundance. But centuries of critical elucidation have left their first meaning secure.

For an example of such a secondary and allegorical meaning, which in no way obscures the primary and literal sense, we may quote St. Zeno, a Bishop of Verona in the fourth century. He has discoursed as follows:[2] "Jesus [Joshua], Son of Nave, was a type of Christ, who is known to be the true Saviour of all, both by His deeds and by His Name. For, since He is called the Rock, rightly did He, too, fashion for Himself knives of stone[3]—that is to say, He formed the Apostles and all His disciples by His teaching, and sharpened them into keen instruments by the file of the Holy Ghost (suâ doctrinâ formatos et Spiritus Sancti limâ acuminatos constituit), wherefore not without reason did He confer the Name of Peter on Simon also, upon whom He built the Church (unde non sine ratione et Simoni, super quem ædificavit Ecclesiam, *Petrus* nomen imposuit).

The words of our Lord to St. Peter are part of our

[1] See p. 174, *supra*.

[2] Lib. I., Tract xiii., *De Circumcisione*, viii. 105.

[3] The reference in this curious passage is to the Latin Bible (Jos. v. 2): Et dixit Deus ad Jesum: Fac tibi cultellos *petrinos* nimis acutos.

APPENDED NOTE B

Catholic birthright. To the Church they have been bequeathed, and were intended not only for the curious speculations of the erudite, but much more for the consolation of the little ones of Christ. A Christian child may see in a moment the force of the mighty promise over which, fulfilled in history, the scholar and the Saint do well for long years to ponder:

"Thou art Kepha, and upon this Kepha I will build My Church."

APPENDED NOTE C

(See pp. 309-317.)

John ii. 1-12.

Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί; "What is to Me and to thee?" This is the literal translation of the Vulgate (Quid Mihi et tibi est?) given by the Douay Version. It is, however, seen from parallel passages in the Septuagint and New Testament to be highly probable that the expression is idiomatic, in which case, to bring out the meaning of the words, it should be translated, "What have I to do with thee in this matter?" (Quid Mihi tecum in hac re est negotii, as Cornelius a Lapide paraphrases it), or simply, "What have I to do with thy request?" (If anyone should feel inclined to question this statement, let him consult 2 Kings xix. 22; 4 Kings ix. 18, 19; Matt. viii. 29; Matt. xxvii. 19, where precisely similar words are translated in the Douay Version: "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Sarvia?" "What hast thou to do with peace?" "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God?" and "Have thou nothing to do with that Just Man," respectively.) Therefore Mgr. Martini thus translates the Greek: "Che ho Io da fare con te, o donna?" Moreover, that this is the true meaning of our Lord's words is the practically unanimous interpretation of those Fathers who have commented on the passage.

The full significance of this difficult saying of our Blessed Lord we can never hope to fathom this side of eternity. Some few amongst the Fathers—two or three great Doctors of the Church—have found in these words of Christ a rebuke, denoting some imperfection in our Lady's speech, as being, though full of charity, too impetuous. But to this the answer is sufficient that, had there been any fault in Mary's desire for a miracle, her

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Son would never have worked that miracle, lest by a miracle He might appear to confirm the fault. It has also been suggested that our Lord implied that His Blessed Mother was curious to see a miracle, and on that ground seemed to reject her petition. But we never read anywhere of Christ that He worked a miracle in response to the request of curiosity. Thus, when Herod desired out of curiosity that the Messias should work "a sign," He "answered him nothing" (Luke xxiii. 8). Again, when once certain Jews said to Him, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee," He replied, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign; and a sign shall not be given it. . . ." (Matt. xii. 38, 39; *cf.* John vi. 30, 32). Moreover, had the Blessed Virgin understood that she had received any rebuke, she would hardly have spoken as she did immediately to the waiters, for in that case she would have added obstinacy to her previous fault. That there was no fault or imperfection in the petition of Mary is surely certain. Our Lord may, as many Fathers of the Church think, have wished by His mysterious words not only to lead her heavenwards in the path of her own sanctification, but also to emphasize the lesson that in working miracles He acted not as the Son of Man, but as the Son of God (so understand it, amongst others, Origen, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great and the Venerable Bede), and also (as St. Bernard thinks—*cf.* his sermon on these words) to suggest to her that now no longer should He be "subject to her" (Luke ii. 51) in the divine economy, but that the time of His public ministry was approaching, when He must leave foster-father and mother and Nazareth, to draw disciples to Himself and create His Church.

In harmony with this view is the commentary of Mgr. Martini on the text: "Non v' ha dubbio, che queste parole prese per quello che suonano naturalmente, porterebbero una specie di reprensione fatta dal Figluolo alla Madre; ma oltre che quello che havvi in esse di apparente durezza, potè essere temperato dall' aria del volto, e dalla maniera con la quale furono dette, contengono esse piuttosto una sublime istruzione diretta non gia alla Madre, a cui nulla era nascoso dei misteri del suo divino Figluolo, ma bensì ai circonstanti, i quali era

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necessario che imparassero a distinguere in Gesù Cristo le due differenti generazioni, sopra le quali parlò divinamente S. Giovanni nel capo precedente. Alla potenza infinita, che egli ha, in quanto Dio, si appartiene il fare miracoli, e non all' essere di uomo ; ed essendo, come dice S. Agostino, vicino a fare un' opera tutta propria di Dio, mostra quasi di non riconoscere la Madre, dalla quale era stato generato secondo la carne, affinchè s' intenda, esservi in lui, oltre quello, che appariva, alcun' altra cosa, alla quale doveva estendersi la fede de' suoi discepoli; e di questa sublime verità, cioè a dire dell' essere divino di Cristo, doveva essere una prova il prodigioso cangiamento dell' acqua in vino."

The following wise note was inserted in the earliest edition (1582) of the Rheims-Douay Bible by the translators, in justification of their literal, non-idiomatic translation of *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ, γύναι ;*

"Because this speech is subject to divers senses, we keep the words of our text, lest by turning it into any English phrase we might straiten the Holy Ghost's intention to some certain sense either not intended or not ONLY intended, and so take away the choice and indifference of the reader, whereof (in Holy Scripture especially) all translators must beware. Thus it may mean here, 'What is that, woman, to Me and thee, being but strangers, that they want wine?', as some interpret it [this, however, will not stand], or—which is the more proper use of that kind of speech in Holy Writ—'What have I to do with thee?', that is, 'Why should I have respect to thy desires in this case? In matters touching My charge and commission of My Father for preaching, working miracles, and other graces, I must not be tied to flesh and blood.' Which was not a reprehension of our Lady, or significative that He would not hear her in this or other things pertaining to God's glory or the good of men, for the event showeth the contrary; but it is a lesson to the company that heard it, and, namely [specially] to His disciples, that respect of kindred should not draw them to do anything against reason or be the principal motion why they do their duties, but God's glory."

For the purposes of our argument, it is sufficient that

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the current Protestant interpretation of the passage is untenable in the face of the context. It does not, of course, follow that that which we have ventured to put forward in this book (pp. 310-316) as the true line of exegesis is necessarily adequate ; it is merely advanced as a hypothesis, which seems to account for the recorded facts without doing any violence to the text. The eloquent Père Didon takes a somewhat different view: "Mary in her anxious eagerness thought at once of her Son. She came to Him and said, 'They have no wine.' . . . He, always master of Himself, and calm with the calmness which nothing earthly disturbed, gently put aside His Mother, moderated her eagerness and charity, and with the gravity of one who, in His divine mission, never obeyed any earthly motive or sentiment, but His Father alone, said, 'Woman,' etc. These words recall those of the twelfth year. . . . A mother's heart is seldom at fault, and, in spite of the affectionate reproof of her Son, Mary did not lose confidence. She understood that her wish was fulfilled ; and in calm reliance on the bounty of Him who could refuse her nothing, and sure of Him as she was of herself, she said to the servants, 'Do whatsoever He shall command you'" (*Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 186).

Moreover, there is a real possibility that "Mine hour is not yet come" should be read as a question, "Is not Mine hour come?" So we find it marked interrogatively in the Diatesseron (a very early and valuable text), and so it is understood by St. Gregory of Nyssa. It is well known, as we need hardly say, that all our Greek manuscripts of the Bible were written for centuries without punctuation of any kind, so that a question might well be missed and read mistakenly as an assertive clause.

If this hypothesis be adopted, all difficulty will at once disappear. The passage may then thus be paraphrased: "Lady, what difference, or difficulty, is there between us in the matter? Has not the hour for manifesting My glory already come?" This will explain our Lady acting immediately as though her Son had granted her request, without any reason remaining for falling back upon the idea (maintained by Dean Alford), that our Lord gave her some secret sign, unrecorded in the Scripture, to

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show that, notwithstanding His seeming refusal, He intended to grant her prayer.

In confirmation of this view, it should be borne in mind that *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*; is itself a translation. Our Lord spoke in Aramaic, and the words that He used were, in all probability, 'MAH LI VALAK.' This idiomatic phrase is, as a general rule, translated very fairly, "What have I to do with thy request?" but we are assured by Hebrew scholars that it by no means invariably bears this meaning. The learned Father Hull, S.J., writes as follows on this subject: "The only English expression which can be adopted as a universal formula is this, 'What is there between us?' leaving in the context the more specific meanings—*e.g.*, 'What cause of quarrel, what cause of interference, what connection, what agreement,' etc." This conclusion is confirmed by consulting the kindred Arabic.

A missionary from Bagdad, who habitually uses that language with his people, gives us the following opinion: "The Arabic expression, 'MA ALEI ONA ALEIKI,' seems to be identical with the Hebrew 'MAH LI VALAKI.' It is familiarly used on all occasions. It can always be rendered, 'What is there between us?' Most commonly it means simply, 'There is no connection between us; leave Me alone and do not interfere.' But it is also regularly used in a more friendly sense, meaning, 'There is no difference between us; we quite agree on the point. Hence there is no need for you to urge the matter. Leave it to Me'" (*First Book on Our Lady*, by Rev. E. Hull, S.J. Appendix, p. 19).

So, according to this interpretation, the words of Christ to His Blessed Mother would simply mean, "Leave it to Me. Is not Mine hour come?"

The *Bombay Catholic Examiner* of July 15, 1878, relates the following two incidents:

(1) "The Prefect of the Kurdistan Mission (Dominican) once received a visit from a local Archbishop, and in course of the interview offered to his Grace the sum of 250 francs towards the repair of a certain church. The Archbishop at once raised his hands, leaned back on the divan, and exclaimed, 'MAN BAIN ANTA UN UNA?' The interpreter translated the words into, 'What is that to me

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and to thee?' The Prefect, surprised at what seemed to be an expression of dissatisfaction, asked an explanation. But the Archbishop replied: 'I am satisfied and delighted; you have surpassed my expectations. I was anxiously wishing for help to repair that church, and had come to you for that very purpose. *But you have divined my thoughts without my asking.*' The Archbishop was surprised that the missionary had misunderstood the Biblical expression, which in Chaldean implied union of thought and sentiment (=there is but one thought between us)."

(2) "A native Christian chief, after certain scandalous conduct, went into a monastery for a retreat in order to amend his life. The superior of the monastery recommended him to repair the scandal given, by offering an alms towards the rebuilding of a church half destroyed by a flood. The penitent replied in surprise, 'MAN BAIN ANTA UN UNA?' and explained that during the retreat the same idea had occurred to him. The expression meant: *What a remarkable agreement of thought, there is between us that we should both think of the same thing!*"

Whatever view we may be inclined to adopt as to the exact meaning of our Lord's words at Cana, the clear indubitable facts stand out in bold relief. Neither did Mary understand any repulse in her Son's words, nor did He refuse her prayer. On the contrary, in the event He bent a gracious ear to her kindly supplication. For all time it remains true that Jesus Christ worked His first miracle at the intercession of His Blessed Mother. Through her interposition, the water blushed red at the word of Christ, and His disciples believed in Him. This at least is established beyond dispute for all those who accept the testimony of Holy Scripture.

There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. . . . And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him, They have no wine. . . . Jesus saith to them, Fill the water-pots with water; and they filled them to the brim. And Jesus saith to them, Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast; and they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, . . . His disciples believed in Him.

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